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# EXPOSITORY LECTURES

ON THE

PRINCIPAL PASSAGES OF THE SCRIPTURES

WHICH RELATE TO THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

By GEORGE W. BURNAP,

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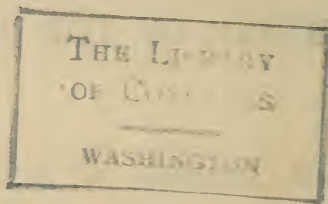
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE object of the publication of the following lectures, is to give to individuals and families the means of explaining those passages of the Scriptures, which are most often quoted, to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. Such a book I believe to be wanted. There is no passage in the Bible, which expresses, or directly teaches this doctrine. This is explicitly acknowledged by the Catholic Church, the most numerous, and perhaps the most learned branch of the Church Universal. The most intelligent Catholics put it, with several other doctrines of their Church, on the ground of tradition. The Protestants, who have derived this tradition from the Catholics, and whose principles forbid them to receive any thing upon the authority of tradition, have attempted to sustain it from the Scriptures. They do not say that there is any passage which expressly asserts it, but that there are many, from which it is *legitimately inferred*. It is the purpose of these lectures, to take up these passages, one by one, and show that this inference is *not* legitimate, that no such doctrine is taught in them, even by implication, that their true import has been mistaken.

It is always objected to Unitarians, that they sustain their doctrines on the ground of reason alone. This certainly amounts to the admission, that their doctrines are more consistent with reason than those to which they are opposed. This, to say the least, is a presumption in their favor. It is the object of these lectures to show that they have *both* reason and Scripture on their side. By the admission of all, the current language of the Bible teaches the strictest unity of God. Taking out a few passages, there is nothing else taught. So much is the Trinity a matter of inference, even from them, that it is said, and I believe justly, that there is not one of them, which has not been given up, as proving nothing to the point, by some one of the ablest defenders of the doctrine. Those texts admit, then, in the judgments of Trinitarians themselves, of another exposition, perfectly consistent with the Unitarian faith. It is the object of these lectures to show that this exposition is the true one, not by putting any forced construction upon language, but by taking into view all those considerations which go to show what the writer meant.

As it happens, almost all those passages, which are quoted to prove the Trinity, have something in them which destroys the argument which is attempted to be drawn from them. The Unitarian perceives that it is not satisfactory, especially against the testimony of the great body of the Scriptures, but he is unable definitely to point out and develope the objection. He knows better what



the text does not mean, than what it does. His general convictions are not shaken. The most that can be said is, that his ignorance of sacred criticism makes certain texts perplexing, which, if he understood the whole subject, would be perfectly plain. It is the purpose of these lectures to remove this perplexity, to point out those circumstances, in the texts alleged, which show not only that they do *not* teach the Trinity, but *do* teach something else, perfectly consistent with the divine Unity.

The reader will find in this book some repetition, obnoxious perhaps to literary criticism. The same texts are repeated in different connexions. This could not have been avoided, without sacrificing fulness and strength of argument to literary symmetry. The same texts are found to have an important bearing on different points of the general argument.

The concluding lecture was originally one of the course, but it introduces a subject somewhat foreign to the main purpose of the book, — the primitive organization of the church. It is printed in the course, on account of the illustration it contains of the meaning of the forms of baptism, and its relation to a subject at this moment deeply interesting to the public mind.

BALTIMORE, Oct. 1844.

## E R R A T A .

- Page 18, line 12, *for* any thing *read* every thing.
- " 19, " 2, *for* classes *read* clauses.
- " 22, " 12, *for* possess *read* possesses.
- " 63, " 30, *for* persons *read* person.
- " 66, " 8, *for* just as Wisdom is &c. *read* just as Word is &c.
- " 110, " 27, *for* that is God, *read* that is, God.
- " 126, " 3, *for* churches *read* church.
- " 163, " 8, *for* communion *read* commission.
- " 172, " 9, *for* the doctrine of the second Person *read* the doctrine  
of the incarnation of the second Person.
- " " " 25, *for* truths *read* truth.
- " 176, " 5, *for* or *read* and.
- " 233, " 20, *for* spirit-revealing truth *read* spirit revealing truth.
- " 253, " 25, *for* abased *for* *read* absolved from.
- " 261, " 14, *for* and rams *read* of rams.
- " 266, " 15, *for* man *read* cross.
- " 292, " 15, *for* Mosaic ceremony *read* Mosaic economy.
- " 295, " 25, *for* then *read* there.
- " 305, " 15, *for* that the Christ *read* that Christ.
- " " " 26, *for* as well to the &c. *read* as well as to the &c.
- " 309, " 1, *for* defined *read* deified.

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EXPOSITORY LECTURES.





# EXPOSITORY LECTURES.

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## LECTURE I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

1 PETER, III. 15.

BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH YOU  
A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.

It is now nine years since I gave a course of doctrinal lectures in this church. It is my present purpose to give another of a similar kind, though on a somewhat different plan. I do it from no love of controversy, nor because I am fond of bringing forward our peculiar views of Christian doctrine. If circumstances were different, I should forbear to do so. If our peculiar views were generally known and understood,—if they were fairly represented even, there would not be the same necessity. But as it is, they are both misconceived and misrepresented. There is scarcely a pulpit in the land, where the sentiments we cherish are not denounced and condemned, and that to people who have no means of knowing them, except these

unfair and denunciatory statements. While this is the case, I hold it to be our duty, from time to time, publicly to state and defend our doctrines, to discuss candidly, fairly, and fully the questions, which have been raised between us and other denominations of Christians. We can conceive of no rational objection to this. We should imagine that all fair-minded men, who have often heard us censured, would gladly embrace the opportunity of hearing our defence, that by knowing the arguments on both sides, they might have the means of making up their own judgments. Any unwillingness to do this, must arise either from a distrust of what they have already embraced as truth, or from the claim of infallibility. If a man feels a fear lest his opinions may be shaken, what is this but a confession that he already suspects that they are unsound? He is already a doubter. Does he feel confident of his infallibility? Who can claim infallibility in this imperfect state? Who has so much light on any subject, that he can receive no more? "Prove all things," says the Apostle. "Hold fast that which is good."

Periodical discussion of the great questions of religion is needed by the rising generation. No one who has not carefully noted the quick succession of the periods of human life, has any idea of the rapidity with which an entire new race comes forward upon the stage. The whole generation now under nine years of age, were of course unborn when I delivered the last course of doctrinal lectures in this church. Those under that age, were too young to take any interest in

the subject. As I do not make a practice of introducing controverted subjects into the ordinary teachings of the sanctuary, all under eighteen years of age are at this moment destitute of any systematic instruction in the principles of their faith. Where shall they go to have them explained? All books, all literature, is pervaded by opposite sentiments and opinions. All preaching is diametrically opposed to it. All conversation, except in some limited circles, takes for granted that their principles are erroneous, dangerous, fatal. There is then no other way than for the religious teacher to indoctrinate the young as they come forward into life, to explain to them the Scriptures, and show them, that the doctrines in which they have been educated, are not the dogmas of authority, but the true meaning of the sacred word of God.

Such a course, I believe, contributes greatly to the comfort and happiness of those who are taught, of all ages. Nothing is more painful than ignorance and doubt. A mind that is continually fluctuating in uncertainties, can never be satisfied, can never be at peace. It is just so in any worldly pursuit. The merchant, who goes into business without any regular training, immediately falls into the greatest and most painful perplexities. Emergencies undoubtedly occur, in which he does not know how to act. He is miserable and perplexed, and perhaps decides wrong at last. There are certain great and general principles which pervade the whole profession, and if he is ignorant of these, he cannot be otherwise than unhappy and unsuccessful. Just so with the mechanic. He must

know the principles of his profession, or his whole enterprise will end in defeat. And is the great calling of the Christian life, less important than any earthly pursuit? Here is the Bible, which contains between its two covers the whole science and the whole practice of religion, the highest object and end of man. And can any man be indifferent whether he understands it or not? Can any man choose to wander on in doubt and uncertainty, when he has the means at hand of satisfying himself? I invite all then, but especially the young, to follow me in my proposed investigations, if from no higher motive, as an intellectual discipline. It is a great gain to learn to think and to reason conclusively. It is a great achievement of the human mind, to gain a clear understanding of one single subject. It lays the foundation for satisfactory investigation into every other. And what nobler subject can be presented to the mind, than theology, that science in which centres, and from which radiates, every other,—the investigation of the Great First Cause? What are all sciences when compared with a knowledge of that Infinite Intellect, from which emanated all sciences? The mind of man has been the subject of philosophical and most interesting inquiry from time immemorial. But what is it in comparison with the Eternal Mind! The mechanism of the universe has attracted the curiosity of thinking men in every age. But how much more exalted the knowledge of the Infinite Architect! History attracts the attention of all men. But how much more worthy of study the Providence of Him who is more ancient than all history, and of whose dealings



with men, history itself is but a scanty and imperfect record ! Moral philosophy has ever been considered a refined and an ennobling pursuit. But the very faculties in man, which make him a subject of moral study, can come from no other source, than the same attributes as they exist in God, in whose image man was made. Society, life, is an entertaining study. We love to hear the causes of individual happiness or misery, success or defeat. Yet at the very moment we are gaining the deepest insight into human affairs, we are only tracing the footsteps of a present Deity. The study of religion then, merely as a study, is the most interesting that ever engaged the mind of man. I invite, therefore, all inquisitive minds to follow me in the succeeding discussion. They will certainly gain some knowledge of a subject which will ever engage the attention of man, while the world stands ; will be a subject of conversation, wherever men think, and reason, and hold communion one with another.

But I fancy, I hear some one object that religion is a mysterious subject, which cannot be understood, and, moreover, was never intended to be understood. It is therefore to be taken upon authority, without examination. Let us examine this objection more closely. Religion, the objector acknowledges, has been made the subject of a revelation. But if it cannot be understood, now it is revealed, then one of two things follows, either that God undertook to do a thing, which cannot be done, or that he did it in such a way as not to answer his purpose. What is an unintelligible revelation, but a thing made known and not made known



at the same time ? You wish to reveal a secret to a friend, and you write to him in a language that he does not understand. Is that any revelation ? Will your friend know anything more about your secret than he did before ? So if your secret is of such a nature, that it cannot be communicated, do you not trifle with your friend, if you make the attempt, if you puzzle and confound him by reference to things, which he knows nothing about, and by language which he cannot comprehend ? Every thing that God has revealed, *must* be intelligible and consistent. Every sentence in the Bible, therefore, has a meaning, and a meaning which is intelligible and consistent. The excuse then that religion is unintelligible has no force, and ought to keep no one back from a diligent study of the Bible. Our Saviour said in his last prayer with his disciples : “ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” In another place, “ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Now can these two representations be true, and yet the knowledge of God and of Christ be such an unintelligible mystery ? Babes can know God and Christ, or those of the weakest understanding, and yet it is an unintelligible mystery ! To my mind it seems much more probable, that mankind have put mysteries into the Bible, and then complained that the Bible is so mysterious, that it cannot be understood.

Another perhaps may say, that he does not feel interest enough in the subject to prompt him to investigate it carefully ; that he deems it all-sufficient to have

a general idea of the doctrines of the Bible ; but to become acquainted with the peculiarities of contending sects, is a matter curious rather than useful. What a confession is this to make concerning the most important and interesting of all subjects ! No man can be serious in making such an objection. And why are you not interested ? Where have been your mind and thoughts, while you have listened to the thousands of sermons you have heard ? What has occupied the hundreds of sabbaths, whose leisure you have enjoyed ? For what purpose have you enjoyed those sabbaths and listened to those discourses, if it was not to become acquainted with all things pertaining to religion ? Books are multiplied with such facility, that they can be procured by all. Why then have you not studied them ?

I am willing to allow that the manner in which these things have been presented, has not promoted activity of mind, or thorough understanding. Nothing is more irksome and discouraging, I confess, than to listen to a discourse, which does not contain clear ideas. Nothing is calculated to produce greater vexation and disappointment, than to hear a subject pursued to a certain point, and then the discussion broken off, under the plea, that it is a mystery, and cannot be understood. And where is mystery to begin, and where is it to end ? There is no ignorance and no negligence, which this plea may not be made to cover up. The inquirer may stop anywhere he pleases, and say that the rest is a mystery. Nay, more, there is no doctrine that may not be introduced into Christianity under cover of mystery. It might be said that Jesus Christ, in the

last supper, gave his disciples his own flesh and blood to eat and drink. In vain might it be urged against this assertion, that there was his own flesh and blood undiminished and unimpaired, and therefore it was impossible in the nature of things, that the bread and wine *could* be his body and blood, and bread and wine at the same time. It might be answered, that it is so stated in the Bible, and how it could be so, is a mystery. If this plea is allowed, then there is no doctrine, which, by taking the literal sense of the Bible, cannot be introduced into religion. It might be asserted that Christ was literally a vine, a door, and a fountain, and that he was a shepherd, and kept sheep.

Besides all this, the representation of religion as mysterious, produces the worst effects upon the intellectual character of those who are taught. It produces indolence, inattention, and despair of ever arriving at any clear conception of the subject. The mind, after listening awhile to such discussions, after grasping in vain for clear and consistent ideas, at length becomes fatigued and disgusted, and turns its meditation on some other subject, more plain and familiar, but foreign to the day and to the occasion ; just as a man will turn from a dark street, where he stumbles every step, into one that is clear and well lighted.

But it is said, perhaps, that the Trinity and its kindred doctrines, are not practical subjects of discourse. It is a matter of mere speculation. A man may be as good a man, and as good a Christian, who believes in a tripersonal God, as if he believed in a God in one person. I answer, that it is not for me to say, what

truths are, and what are not, important ; or how important any particular truth may be. That can be known only to God, who discerns the relation of all truth. It is enough for me to know that anything is true. I must embrace it on my allegiance to God. I must maintain it. It is a noble instinct of my nature to do so. It is an instinct equally noble and generous, for me to desire to impart the truth which I possess to others.

But, if I may judge by the Scriptures, the unity of God is not only a truth, but an important truth. Jesus Christ has told us, that “ the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel ! Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one.” Moses represents God as saying, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” It becomes us, I think, carefully to inquire into the meaning of the word “ me ” in this commandment. “ Me ” is a personal pronoun, in the singular number. Does it mean three persons in this case, and if so, why is it used instead of “ us ” ? If it mean one of three persons, which of the three persons does it mean ? In the former case, is the declaration “ Jehovah is one,” to be taken strictly of one mind, one intelligence, such as we are conscious of possessing in ourselves, or does it mean some other sort of unity, which is consistent with a tripersonal nature ? It seems to me *most* important to settle this point, as both Christ and Moses make it the foundation stone of religious faith.

But not only is the Unity of God important, as the theoretic basis of religious truth, but in its practical bearings. Our Saviour has taught us to pray, saying,



“Give us this day our daily bread,” thereby intimating that we must pray daily. If we adopt the hypothesis of a tripersonal God, then a difficulty will be presented every day of our lives, *how* we are to pray. There are not only great intellectual perplexities presented in admitting into the mind the conception of a Being who is three and yet one, but the difficulties are but begun. As soon as you admit three Persons, each equally God, an important duty follows. Three persons are not only to be believed in, but worshipped, and worshipped equally, the one as much as the other. If you address them all as one God, without distinction of person, then all idea of a Trinity is lost, and becomes a dead letter. It is retained in the *creed*, and neglected in the prayer. The word, God, conveys to most minds the idea, not only of one Being, but one Person, as is proved by the singular personal pronouns, *thee* and *thou*, which always accompany it. Can any conscientious man satisfy his own mind in the practical neglect of so important a truth, and believe in three Persons, and pray only to one?

The fact is, that to frame a prayer consistent with his creed, the Trinitarian must invent a new language, the words of which must have the power of expressing unity and plurality at the same time. Now, unfortunately, there is only one word in our language by which this can be done, and that word is Trinity; a word, not of Scriptural origin, nor invented for many ages after the Scriptures were written. And then there are no other words in the language to correspond to this. All other words must address either one or many. And



the difficulty is not verbal merely, but intellectual. You cannot in thought worship a Being who is three and yet one. While you think of the Unity, you must lose sight of the Trinity ; and when you think of the Trinity, you must lose sight of the Unity.

The fact is, that a majority of Trinitarians do not attempt to pray according to their creed. Their prayers are essentially Unitarian. They address only one of the three persons, and that is the first, and make the term Father synonymous and coëxtensive with the word God. If they did pray according to their creed, the Lord's prayer itself would have to be altered. If that hypothesis be true, it is at present exceedingly deficient. They ought to take their pens and strike out of it, "Our Father who art in heaven," and insert, "Most holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God," and then there would be a difficulty whether to place the verb following in the singular or plural number, to agree with "Trinity," or "three Persons."

Besides, worship is founded on certain relations of the person worshipping to the person worshipped. We worship God because He is our Creator. He is the Former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits. Is creation a joint work of the three Persons ? Then we have three Creators, and we ought to worship three Creators. Is it the work of one of the Persons ? Then we ought to worship that one as our Creator. But if so, then the worship and glory of the other two must be, to the same extent, diminished and impaired. Does the Trinitarian worshipper regard himself as being

looked upon by three omniscient Persons ? Does he carry this conception in his mind when he worships ? If not, he is a Trinitarian in words, but not a Trinitarian in fact. If he conceives of one of the Persons as appropriating to himself any one of the functions of Deity, then the Divine honors of the others are just so far impaired. If a man really cherishes this belief, must not these practical difficulties be a great trouble to his conscience, and make him very anxious in the exact distribution of the homage due to the Divine Being, among the three persons of which he is composed ? And if he finds it impossible to make these distinctions, let him confess, what is the fact, that he is a Unitarian in reality, though a Trinitarian in words ; that his usual conception of God is of one Person, one Mind, one Spirit, “the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be glory everlasting ; Amen and Amen.”

But not only is a tripersonal God embarrassing as an object of prayer, but equally embarrassing when made an object of thought. The consequence of this hypothesis is, that the idea of God, under the Trinitarian conception, is the most vague and shifting idea that can be presented to the human mind. It may be answered, that the idea of God itself is obscure. It is, but simply because it transcends human thought by its vastness, not because it is made so by intrinsic inconsistencies and contradictions. Our knowledge of the human mind is imperfect ; but we are not troubled with any difficulties as to its unity. We have the clearest

conception of its possessing one consciousness and one will. The very faculties which enable us to conceive of God at all, lead us to conceive of Him as possessing one consciousness and one will, as being, therefore, one Designer and one Agent. We cannot, even in thought, distribute this consciousness and this will among three Personalities, all existing at the same time. It is equally impossible for us to conceive of a Person *without* these inherent elements of personality, consciousness and will. There is no way then, in which we can conceive of God, under the Trinitarian view of him, without identifying him with one of the three Persons, and we cannot think of Him as being and doing what God ought to be and do, without tacitly considering the other two Persons as quiescent, and, in fact, sinking them into nonentities.

But in consequence of these vague ideas of the Divine Unity, passages of the Scriptures are alleged as proving the tripersonality of God, which not only have no such meaning, but, when carefully examined, are found to be altogether *subversive* of it. No text of the New Testament has been more frequently cited, perhaps, in proof of the Trinity, than the last verse of Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians. It is a benediction. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the participation of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Here, it is said, are the three Persons of the Trinity, brought together, made equal, and more than this, made the objects of worship. But all appearance of intimating such a doctrine, is instantly dissipated by a consideration, which seems to

have been strangely overlooked. The second Person of this Trinity is *God*, the whole Deity, without any distinction of persons. "The love of *God*." God, the whole Deity, cannot be a Person of the Trinity. Had the expression been "the love of the Father," then there would have been something like a reason for considering this text as an argument for the Trinity. The Trinity here expressed, is not a Trinity *in* God, for God is here one of the three Persons. It is true, there are here three subjects of discourse, God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Only one of these is God, by the very terms of the expression, "the love of *God*." So far then from supporting the doctrine of the Trinity, this passage contains a strong argument against it. Divinity is by implication *denied* to Christ, for he is spoken of in connexion with God, but as distinct from him. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, *and* the love of God." There is no intimation that these two persons are one being, or that they are both God, or constitute one God. One is God, in the most unlimited sense, *comprehending* the three persons, if the word God ever can be supposed to do so. The other is the Lord Jesus Christ, connected with God by the particle *and*, proving, if anything can prove, that the Lord Jesus Christ is *out* of the Deity, and not *in* it.

In the last clause, the word "fellowship" serves to mystify this passage. In common language, this word is nearly synonymous with the word "companionship," and would seem to intimate that the Apostle wished the early Christians the companionship of the Holy



Spirit. But the English word, which comes nearest to it, is "participation." We have fellowship *with* a person, but participation *in* a thing. It is only by a figure of speech, that we can participate in a person. We participate in a thing without a figure. The meaning, therefore, evidently is, "May you be partakers of the Holy Spirit."

The phrase "the Holy Spirit," so far from indicating a person, is in the original in the neuter gender, signifying that it is not a person, but a thing. There are doubts then, suggested by the very language, not only whether the Holy Spirit be a Person of the Trinity, but whether it be a person at all. Those doubts are much strengthened, when we compare such parallel passages as these: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." The same writer expresses the same meaning in another place; "I send the promise of my Father upon you, — ye shall be endued with *power from on high*." To be baptized with a person, hardly makes sense. Besides, what is called "the Holy Ghost," in one passage, is evidently called "power from on high" in the other. Power from on high is evidently not a person.

There is another passage, of a similar import, near the beginning of the Gospel according to Luke. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and *the power of the Highest* shall overshadow thee." Here is evidently a Hebraism, the repetition of the same meaning in two different forms of words. "The power of the Highest" is only another phrase for "the Spirit of God," or "the Holy Ghost." There is another passage of



a like construction in the Acts ; “ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and *with power.*” The Holy Ghost is here evidently synonymous with miraculous power. If there were any doubt upon that subject, it would be removed by comparing these words of Peter with another passage from the same speaker, when the same thing is the subject of discourse. “ Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, *by miracles, and signs, and wonders,* which God did *by him* in the midst of you, as ye yourselves do know.” What in the one case is called the “ Holy Ghost ” and “ power,” is in the other called “ miracles, and wonders, and signs.” How far this is the representation of a person, I leave every one to judge for himself.

Whether the personality of the Spirit is sustained by the general language of the Scriptures, may be learned from such texts as these. “ I will *pour out* of my Spirit.” “ Jesus, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath *shed forth* this, which ye now see and hear.” “ They of the circumcision were astonished, because on the Gentiles *was poured out* the Holy Ghost.”

These quotations, from different parts of the New Testament, will aid us in determining whether the “ participation of the Holy Ghost,” which the Apostle wishes that Christians may enjoy, is *companionship with a person*, or the *participation in a thing*. And if this latter view of things be correct, the Trinity spoken of in the Apostolic benediction, is not a Trinity of

persons even ; one of the three subjects of discourse is a thing, and not a person. Such an analysis of this proof-text is sufficient to show us how exceeding vague men's ideas of the Divine Unity have become, under the influence of the Trinitarian system, and how prone men have become to offer and accept as demonstration, that which, when examined, turns out to be no argument at all.

Another striking instance of the tendency of the human mind, under the influence of theological systems, to draw broad conclusions from narrow premises, is the fact that so much has been made of the form of baptism in the Trinitarian controversy, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This form will be more particularly analyzed in the last lecture of the course. Here I notice it merely to point out the fallacy of the argument that is usually raised upon it. It is affirmed that each of these is a person, and each must be God, because Christians were baptized into the name of each. But let the advocate of the Trinity turn to the eighth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and he will find that his argument proves too much, and will make Moses to be God, or a person of the Godhead. The same Apostle elsewhere says : "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." This undoubtedly means Christian baptism. But does it prove that Christ was God, or a Person in God ? Let us examine. The same writer says of the Israelites, that they "were all baptized unto (literally into) Moses in the cloud and in the sea." If the baptism of Chris-

tians into Christ, proves him to be God, then the baptism of the Israelites into Moses, proves him to be God. And if it does not in the case of Moses, neither does it in the case of Christ.

I go further, and say, that people might be baptized into *things*, as well as persons, and so the form of baptism will not even prove the Holy Ghost to be a person. Paul says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, *were baptized into his death.*" John the Baptist says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto (literally into) repentance." If anything into which men were baptized, were a person, then death and repentance are persons. And if men were baptized into things, as well as persons, then the occurrence of the phrase "Holy Ghost," in the form of baptism, does not prove it to have been a person. The argument, therefore, which is derived from the form of baptism, to prove both the Deity of Christ, and the personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost, falls to the ground.

I have here adverted to the form of baptism, chiefly for the purpose of noticing the most unwarrantable inferences which have been drawn from it. Three articles of a creed, as I shall hereafter show, are transformed into three Persons of a Trinity. This inference has been expressed in a set form of devotion, and thousands and tens of thousands are made to pray every Sunday to *three* objects of worship, in a form totally unauthorized by the Scriptures; "O God the Father, have mercy upon us; O God the Son, have mercy upon us; O God the Holy Ghost, have mercy

upon us." Perhaps not one in a hundred is aware, that the second and third classes of this form, are altogether unscriptural. There is nothing like them to be found, either in the Old or New Testament. They are nothing but uncertain inferences, exalted into positive dogmas, and incorporated into the most solemn worship. *There is no such phrase in the Bible, as "God the Son," or "God the Holy Ghost."* The nearest approach there is to "God the Son" is "the Son of God." Now there is not only a difference between "God the Son" and "the Son of God," but an *infinite* difference. "God the Son" must be God, but the Son of God CANNOT be God. Neither can "the Son of God" be a Person of the Trinity. God, when the word stands by itself, even according to the Trinitarian hypothesis, stands for the whole Trinity. The Son of God then, must be the Son of the whole Trinity. The *Son* of the whole Trinity *cannot* be a Person in the Trinity. Besides, no *derived* being *can* be God, and the word "Son," so far as it expresses any thing, expresses the idea, that the person, to whom it is applied, *is* a derived being, and of course *cannot* possess underived, independent and eternal existence. The very phrase then, "God the Son," is not only unscriptural, but a self-contradiction in its very structure. And yet Christians are heard to repeat this phraseology Sunday after Sunday, without reflecting either upon its origin or its import.

The true meaning of the epithet, "Son of God," when applied to Jesus, may be learned from many parts of the New Testament. It was merely an equivalent



expression to "Messiah," or "Christ." This is shown conclusively by comparing two parallel passages in John's first Epistle.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus *is the Christ*, is born of God."

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus *is the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

According to these two texts, to believe that Jesus is "the Christ," is the same thing as to confess that he is "the Son of God." To be baptized into the name of "the Son," does not mean then, being baptized into a profession of belief in Jesus as a Person of the Trinity, or as "God the Son," but simply into a profession of belief in him as "the Christ," or "Messiah."

The plan of the course of lectures in which I shall endeavour to engage your attention this winter, is purely expository and practical. I wish to engage you all in the study of the Bible. I wish to lead each one to investigate for himself, that his opinions may be no longer founded on the authority of any man, but on personal examination; that, in the language of the Apostle, "we may be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine." And the only way to study the Bible, is to bring together all the texts which relate to any subject, and compare them with each other. Unless we do this, we are liable to deduce from detached passages the most erroneous conclusions. The meaning of one text must be allowed to modify the meaning of another; the great majority are to be taken as the rule, a small minority as the exception. That which is plain, must



be suffered to throw light on that which is obscure, that which is literal, permitted to interpret that which is figurative.

If the opposite course is adopted, if a small minority is taken as the rule, and the great majority made the exception, if what is dark is to give a meaning to what is plain, and make that dark too, if the figurative is to be made to interpret the literal, then the Scriptures will become a mass of contradictions, a collection of riddles, and their authority can be sustained only under cover of the plea of mystery.

I intend to go through the whole Bible, and explain all the principal texts which relate to the unity or plurality of the Divine Nature. I shall compare the texts which are thought to prove the Unity, with those which are considered to prove the Trinity, as to number and conclusiveness. I shall then take up the principal passages, one by one, which are quoted to prove the Trinity. I shall examine critically the seventh and ninth chapters of Isaiah, the first chapter of John, the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the book of Revelation. The remaining lectures will be of a more miscellaneous character.

In the pursuit of this investigation, it will be my sincere desire and endeavour to avoid giving pain to any one who may entertain different opinions from myself, or who shall be conducted to different conclusions from the same premises. Every man's sincere opinions are entitled to respect, and shall always receive respect at my hands. I merely ask all to review the grounds of their own opinions. If they are well founded, all I

can say will not shake them. If they are merely traditionary, it will give them the opportunity of verifying, by their own examination, what they have hitherto taken on trust. At any rate, it will increase their knowledge of the Bible, the great storehouse of divine truth. It will enable them better to understand a subject deeply interesting to all.

And I am not without my hopes of great practical good resulting from doctrinal discussion, for if I know my own heart, I had rather make one practical Christian, than fifty skilful polemics. The wisest of us possess only an approximation to the truth. What we believe, we have embraced upon the best information we have possessed. We ought then, rather to be helped on to something better in future, than blamed for what we have believed in time past. And it is our duty always to keep our minds open to new accessions of truth, to discard, as far as possible, all prejudice, and never to be ashamed of being wiser to-day than we were yesterday. Ever be ready to listen to what any honest man has to say for his honest opinion, for no human mind has ever seen the whole of truth. It follows of course, that it exists in fragments among the various sects into which the church has been divided. Although you may not be convinced by what seems irresistible demonstration to another, you may be led to see that he has strong reasons for his faith, strong enough at least to rescue him from the imputation of want of integrity and want of sense.

I know of no way in which the narrow sectarianism, which deforms and distracts the Christian Church, can

be broken up, except by a freer intercourse and communion among all who bear the Christian name. Let them listen candidly to each other, and if not brought to think alike, they will be brought to perceive that the points in which they differ, are of less importance than they imagined, while they kept aloof from each other. And above all, let them beware of the iniquity of condemning unheard, any class of Christians, who take the Bible for their guide.

## LECTURE II.

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### TRINITY AND UNITY.

JOHN, XVII. 3.

AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE, THE ONLY  
TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM THOU HAST SENT.

It will be the object of this lecture, to state the argument between the advocates of the Trinitarian and Unitarian faith. What are their doctrines, and by what arguments are they sustained? What objections lie against them each, and how are those objections explained away? The two parties agree in their definition of what God is. In the words of the Westminster Catechism, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." In the answer to the next question of the same Catechism, they both agree. Question. "Are there more gods than one?" Answer. "There is but One only, the living and the true God." In the answer to the next question, they are diametrically opposed. "How many persons are there in the Godhead?" The Trinitarian answers, There are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father,



the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This the Unitarian categorically denies. He affirms, that the Father is the only living and true God, that the Son is not God, and that the Holy Ghost is not a person. Here then the case is made up, and the question stated, and the evidence is to be produced on both sides, and all who hear or read, are the jury to decide which side is proved by the evidence.

But before we proceed to the discussion, it is necessary that we should settle the meaning of the terms we are to use. What do we mean, when we say that God is One? We mean, I conceive, the same thing that is meant, when the Scriptures say, "that God is a Spirit." All we can know of God, is through the analogy of the human spirit. We cannot imagine a single attribute in God, which we do not find in ourselves in some degree. We have the authority of the Scriptures for saying, that God created man in his own image. We find no Trinity of persons in man; and if there is in God, then man is not created in the image of God. The attributes of a human spirit are, one undivided consciousness, carrying on one process of mental operations, and one will; one thinking principle, and one agent. This is the only possible idea that we can form of God. What is the meaning of the word person? It has two principal meanings. One is, a rational, intelligent agent. The other is, a character in which an agent acts. Under different characters the agent may continue identically the same. These are the only intelligible meanings of the word person. If we use the word in the first sense, the



proposition, "There are three Persons in the Godhead," becomes contradictory. It will be this, There are three Persons in one Person. If we use it in the second, the phraseology is wrong. It ought not to be, There are three Persons in the Godhead, but God acts in three Persons, or three characters, which would not be inconsistent with his essential unity. The way then, in which this fallacy is covered over, is by a slight shifting of terms in the two propositions. God is changed in the second proposition into Godhead. Godhead can, in reality, mean nothing more nor less than God. But if the word God had been retained, the very proposition would have carried its own refutation along with it, for it would have stood thus, There are three Persons in God.

But the advocates of the Trinity declare, that they do not use the word Person in either of these senses. But in what sense they do use it, they do not define. If this be the case, then we are contending about a proposition, the meaning of which its very advocates themselves do not pretend to understand. It is impossible to refute a proposition which has no definite meaning. You may take it in all known meanings, and refute them all, and still they may say, that they do not take it in any of them, and refusing to define their meaning, still assert that the proposition is true.

There are but two sources of evidence upon this subject, the works of God, and his word, the light of Nature and the light of Revelation. Does nature, the works of God, furnish any evidence that God subsists in three Persons? Not one particle. There is

no more evidence that he subsists in three Persons, than in four, or forty. The whole universe bear marks of being the work of one designing mind, one first cause, one intellect, one will, one energy, in short, one Person, in the only sense in which the word person has any meaning when applied to the subject. Not the slightest traces can we find of the agency of more than one Person in the universe. From nature then, the proposition, "There are three Persons in the Godhead," derives not the least particle of support. So far then as one source of evidence is concerned, it falls to the ground, and the opposite proposition is established, that God subsists in one Person, instead of three.

We go then to the Scriptures, the second source of evidence, with a *strong presumption* in favor of the doctrine of the personal unity of God, and against that of there being three Persons in God, or God subsisting in three persons, arising from the fact, that the doctrine that God is one Person is intelligible, reasonable, and consistent, and is confirmed by the appearances of nature ; whereas a God in three Persons is unintelligible, unreasonable, inconsistent, and comes so near a contradiction, that many minds can see no difference between them.

When we come to the Bible, the state of the question is this. It is not pretended that it is any where expressly asserted that God subsists in three persons. On the other hand, it is expressly asserted that God is one ; not only that there is but one God, but that God is one. The way then, that the doctrine

of the Trinity is proved from the Scriptures is this. It is asserted, that three Persons are there spoken of, who possess divine attributes. The natural inference from this would be, that there are three Gods, or that God acts in three characters ; but another inference is drawn from it, different from either, that each of these Persons is God, the one God, and yet are different from each other. Now it is true, that God subsists either in one person, or in three persons. If the Scriptures assert both sides of this proposition, then the Scriptures contradict themselves, and it is impossible to ascertain the truth from them. If the Scriptures are true, the advocates of one doctrine or the other misinterpret them. Here then are the texts on both sides, those which seem to teach a Trinity, and those which seem to teach the Unity. If the Trinity is true, then all those texts which seem to teach the Unity must be capable of being explained, so as to agree with it, for they are so many objections to it. If the Unity is true, then all those texts which seem to teach the Trinity, must be capable of an explanation consistent with the Unity. Then the question would be, supposing them both to be equally possible and probable in themselves, whether it is easier to explain those passages, which seem to teach a Trinity in consistence with those which teach the Unity, or to explain those which teach the Unity in consistence with those which teach the Trinity. And this seems to me to be a fair statement of the question. All the arguments in favor of one, are difficulties in the way of the other. It is a balance of opposite arguments and opposite difficulties. Every

text in the Old and New Testaments, in which God is spoken of without any distinction of Persons, or as one Person, is an argument for the Unitarian faith, and presents a difficulty to the Trinitarian, which must be explained away. A reason must be given, why God in that particular case, did not speak, or was not spoken of as three Persons, but did speak, or was spoken of, as one Person. In short, those passages of Scripture must be reasoned away. Of the thirteen hundred places in the New Testament alone, in which the word God appears, there is not one, which necessarily implies three Persons. In the Old Testament there are above two thousand places, in which the word God appears, without any intimation of a distinction of Persons. There are seventeen places in the New Testament, in which the Father is called the *one*, or the *only* God. Now all these, more than two thousand passages, the Trinitarian must explain, that is, show by reasoning, how each individual case is consistent with the supposition of a Trinity of Persons in God. The Unitarian is accused of explaining away Scripture ; but what are the few texts which he has to explain, when compared with two thousand ?

I would begin then by saying, the very terms in which the Trinity is expressed, contain a refutation of the doctrine, " There are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The terms Father and Son, contradict the very hypothesis. So far as these terms express the relation between the two Persons, they assert that one is derived from the other. An eternal Son is a contradiction in terms,



and the very definition given of God is, that he is eternal and unchangeable. The Son then, so far as the word Son expresses his attributes, *cannot* by any possibility be God. No derived or dependent being *can* be God. The question immediately occurs, Of whom is he the Son? The Scriptural answer is, "The Son of God." The Son *of* God cannot *be* God, because he must be another, and be derived, and because the attributes, which are necessary to Deity cannot be communicated, eternity and self-subsistence. It is true, theologians have invented a hypothesis to cover up this difficulty, and said that the Son is derived by an eternal generation. But this is only substituting one difficulty for another. Eternal generation is just as much a contradiction, as eternal Son. Then as to the third Person, the Holy Ghost, the very phrase shows that it is not only not a Person of the Godhead, but not a person at all. Ghost is an obsolete word, meaning the same thing as spirit. Now *the* Holy Spirit is not a proper name; it is the name of a thing. As such, it is in the neuter gender in English, and so it was in Greek. A *thing* is generally the *property* of some *person*. We ask, whose the Holy Spirit is? And the Scriptural answer is, that it is the Spirit *of* God. And if it is the Spirit of God, it can no more be a person, separate from God, than the spirit of a man can be a person, separate from the man himself. And this agrees precisely with the representation of Scripture. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God."



Of what elements is the Trinity made up, according to the very terms in which it is expressed, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ? The first Person is God, the second the Son of God, and the third the Spirit of God. And what sort of a Trinity is this, made up of the Deity, a person *derived from* the Deity, and the spiritual essence of the Deity ? I here might close the discussion with a simple analysis of the terms of the proposition, laid down to be proved. But it will be proper, in order more fully to develop the subject, to go into it more at large, and explain those texts of Scripture, which are thought to justify such a conception of God.

I commence therefore the argumentative part of my discourse by saying, that not only is the doctrine of the Trinity not proved by those texts, which are alleged in its support, but is always invalidated by something in the text itself, or in immediate connexion with it.

We will begin with the exclamation of Thomas to Jesus after his resurrection : “ My Lord and my God.” This is often alleged as an irresistible argument in favor of the Trinity. But a glance is sufficient to show, that it has no bearing upon the subject. There is nothing said in it concerning a Trinity, or three Persons in the Godhead. If we suppose Thomas, in this case, to use the word God in its highest sense, it would only prove Thomas to have believed the person, who stood before him, to be the Jehovah of the Jews, but without the least intimation that Jehovah had in himself three persons or distinctions, but rather

the contrary, for he says, "My Lord and my God," both nouns in the singular number, and applicable to only one person instead of three.

But to my mind, it seems more probable, that he did not regard the person who stood before him as the Supreme Jehovah, but used the word God in a lower sense, in the same sense in which it is used in the Old Testament, as a term of the highest reverence to persons of exalted character or station, to kings and magistrates, to Moses and to David. And the reasons which lead me to think so, are the very circumstances of the case. Thomas doubted — what? that Jesus had risen from the dead. And what was the proof which he demanded? "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Jesus gave him the evidence which he demanded; he felt his hands and his side. What he said then, was an exclamation of satisfaction on the point which he had disbelieved, — that he had risen. Was touching his wounds any evidence that he was the infinite Jehovah? The infinite Jehovah risen from the dead! Impossible. In three verses farther on, John, the historian of this interview, writes, "And these were written that ye might believe that Jesus is the *Christ*," or the Messiah, not Jehovah, but "the Son of God."

There is another passage of nearly the same nature in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, ninth chapter, which I shall now consider. As given in our common version, it stands thus: "Whose are the fathers, and of

whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." This has been cited millions of times as irrefragable proof of the Trinity. But let us examine it, and if I mistake not, we shall find it not only no argument for a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, but an insuperable objection to it. There is not a word in it intimating a Trinity, or any distinction of the Godhead into three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a part of the scheme of Trinitarianism, that this distinction existed in the Divine Nature, *before* the existence of the human nature of Christ. It is likewise a part of the same system, that only one of the three Persons, the Son, became incarnate in the human nature of Christ. But this passage, if it proved any incarnation, would prove the incarnation of the *whole* Deity, without distinction of persons. "God over all," must mean the whole Deity, for neither of the Persons can be God over all, for he must be God over the other two, under the category of "all." This passage then, so far from being a proof of the Trinity, is utterly subversive of it, and proves, if it proves anything, that there is no such distinction in the Godhead, that God is one, one Person as well as one Being. But it is unnecessary to go into any such explanation, as the present sense depends altogether on the present punctuation, and the punctuation, as we have it, depended on the opinion of our translators, who were Trinitarians. In the most ancient copies of the Bible, there is no punctuation. There are no spaces between the words. The letters are what we call capital letters, and are written along after one another

as we write the alphabet, without division into words. Of course, punctuation is arbitrary. If therefore we put a period after Christ, the whole passage will read thus. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. He who is God over all, *be blessed forever.*"

I am aware that it has been said, that there are grammatical difficulties in the way of the rendering which I have given. But I am convinced, after the most mature examination, that there are greater difficulties in the construction which was given by king James's translators, in our common version. This I hope to be able to show to the satisfaction even of those who are unacquainted with the original.

A simple sentence usually affirms or denies something of a person or a thing. The person or thing spoken of, is in the language of logic, called the *subject*. What is affirmed of the subject, is called the *predicate*. As for instance, "God is great." God, in this case, is the subject, and great the predicate. A sentence may have two predicates. In that case, it becomes a compound sentence. But the rules of grammar compel us to connect them by a particle, such as *and*, *or*, &c. God is great *and* good. If we leave out the connecting particle, we consolidate the two predicates into one. In other words, we cannot have two predicates without a connecting particle.

I go on to apply these principles to the case under consideration. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all, God,



blessed forever. Amen." If we make "who" relate to Christ, then we make God the predicate of the sentence, which commences after the word flesh, and then we have three predicates without any connecting word, namely, first, that Christ is over all, secondly, that he is God, and thirdly, that he is blessed forever. Now the rules of grammar do not permit us to arrange words in this way. Paul himself, with all his haste, did not jumble words together in this manner, mixing up ascriptions with simple affirmations. The difficulty is removed by making a full point at the word flesh, "of whom is Christ according to the flesh," and considering the remainder as a perfect sentence. "God" then becomes the subject of this latter sentence, and "blessed" the predicate; and this pointing, to my mind, makes better grammar as well as theology, than the common reading, and it stands thus; "Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom *is* Christ, according to the flesh. He, who is God over all, *be* blessed forever."

Some scholars have been embarrassed by commencing a new sentence with the Greek phrase, *ὁ ὧν*, he who, as a compound, instead of a relative pronoun. I can only say, that there is abundant authority for it in the New Testament. The second clause of the thirty-first verse of the third chapter of John's Gospel, begins in the same way. "He that is, *ὁ ὧν*, of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth." The forty-seventh verse of the eighth chapter begins in the same way. "He that is, *ὁ ὧν*, of God, speaketh the words of God." A similar construction is found in the forty-



sixth verse of the sixth chapter. "Not that any one hath seen the Father, except it be he, who is, *ὁ ὢν*, with God ; he hath seen the Father."

For these reasons, abstracted from all theological considerations, I should prefer the reading given above on the ground of grammatical construction alone.

I know it has been objected likewise to the rendering I have given above, that the change of subject is too sudden. The doxology, if directed to God, is too unpremeditated, and breaks the continuity of thought. But there is a passage in the same writer, in his first Epistle to Timothy, where the transition is quite as sudden and abrupt, and the doxology to God quite as unconnected with what had gone before. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." This, to my mind, bears a strong resemblance to the other, and is in the middle of an earnest discourse.

Another passage, upon which great stress is laid, is found in the twentieth verse of the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John. In our common version it reads thus : "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true,

*even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." It is affirmed, that in this passage Christ is called the true God, by making the last clause of the sentence to refer to Jesus instead of God. But, as it happens, the passage, as it now stands, does not make sense. "We are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ," is not sense. It would be making God and his Son Jesus Christ, one and identical, the same person and the same being, which destroys the Trinity, as well as makes no sense ; for it is necessary to the Trinity to make the Father and the Son to be two persons, distinct, as persons, from each other. Besides, it makes the latter part of the sentence contradict the former. The former part of the sentence is : "The Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding, that we may know him that is true ;" that is, that we may know God,—parallel to that passage in which Christ avers that he came that "men might know the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent ;" and the consequence is, that we are *in* him that is true, that is, we *believe* in him that is true, or in the true God, and devote ourselves to him. As is said by Peter, in one of his Epistles, "Who *by him* do believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory." But the latter part of the sentence confounds the instrument, by which we are in God, with that God in whom we are, by his instrumentality. The whole inconsistency is removed by giving the passage its true translation. If you will look into your Bibles, you will find the particle "*even*" printed in italics, which means that it

is not in the original, but is supplied by the translators, to make out what they thought the sense. The Greek preposition, *εν*, rendered, in our version, *in*, has a great variety of significations. Among others, it often means *through*, indicating the instrument by which anything is done. For instance, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils," literally, *εν*, *in*. "Such can come out only through prayer and fasting," literally, *εν*, *in*; and a host of other examples might be given. Translating the second "*εν*," by *through*, as the indication of the instrument, and leaving out the word *even*, which was arbitrarily put in, we have the meaning clear and consistent: "We are in him that is true, *through* his Son Jesus Christ," that is, through his instrumentality; which is precisely the fact, and corresponds with the former part of the sentence, as will appear when we put it all together: "We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life," referring, not to Jesus Christ, but to "him that is true," that is, God, in whom we are through Jesus Christ.

There is another passage, of nearly the same nature, which has often been adduced to prove the Trinity, which, when examined, is found to look precisely in the opposite direction. It is found in Christ's conversation with Thomas, probably at the last supper. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my

Father also ; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” At first sight of this passage, the Trinitarian would exclaim, perhaps, What more explicit assertion of our doctrine could we ask than this ? What words could Christ have chosen more decisive than these ? But, on a nearer examination, it is found not only not to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, but to be inconsistent with it. Taking the words in their literal import, they would assert that he was the Father himself, in his whole personality, and that he himself had no personality beside. Now is this consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity, which strenuously maintains that Jesus had a human nature, a human body, and a human soul ? Allowing that he had a human body and a human soul, then, if he who saw him saw the Father, it would follow that the Father became incarnate, which Trinitarianism positively denies. The Son became incarnate, but not the Father. The Father, the first Person of the Trinity, sent the Son, who is the second Person. But here the Father came himself. This text, then, if taken literally, would prove too much, too much for the very doctrine which it is brought to substantiate. But, as he proceeds, he explains himself, and shows that it is not of a literal seeing God that he speaks, nor is it of a personal union with him. “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself ;



the Father, who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." If these words proved the incarnation of one of the Persons of the Trinity, it would prove that of the Father. The way then, in which God appears in Christ, according to this language, is, that God wrought his miracles, and gave him his doctrines. Those who saw his miracles and heard his doctrines, gained a clearer knowledge of God. There is no intermediate agency of any such person as is called the Son, the second Person of the Trinity. For he, possessing infinite attributes, would naturally have exerted them in performing the miracles of Jesus. If there were such a person in Christ, he was entirely quiescent, and is passed over in the profoundest silence. Neither can he be supposed to be included in the person represented by the pronoun "me," in the sentence, "The Father, that dwelleth in *me*, he doeth the works," for one Person of the Trinity, cannot be supposed to dwell in, and do the works of another. There is nothing left then, in this representation, but the Father and the human nature of Christ. That this indwelling does not constitute a personal identity, appears in the very language: "The Father that dwelleth in *me*." He who affirms that God dwells in him, denies, of course, that he is God. So that this passage, which is so often appealed to as proving the Trinity, when examined and analyzed, is found to be utterly inconsistent with it, and to teach, in fact, the simplest form of Unitarianism. The connection between God and Christ, which is here pointed out, is the very one that Unitarians acknowledge. Through Christ, we believe,

God was manifested to the world in a more full and glorious manner than he is in any other way. But the idea, that he who fills immensity and inhabits eternity, became incarnate in a finite human being, seems to them to be in itself a most astonishing imagination, equally repugnant to the essential attributes of Jehovah, as to the express language of the Scriptures. And then, were there any such things as persons in God, the objections to incarnation would lie in equal force against either, and against all.

But it is said, that the Apostles and early Christians worshipped Christ. If he was not God, then they were idolators. It is said, that Stephen worshipped him in his last moments. Our Bible tells us: “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

I would first remark upon this passage, that the word *God* is not in the original, but was supplied by our Trinitarian translators, as you will perceive, on examining your Bibles, that the word is printed in italics. It was honestly done, doubtless, for they thought that the doctrine of the Trinity was taught in other parts of the Scriptures, and therefore saw no harm in putting it in here.

It is only necessary to go back a few verses, and read what Stephen saw in vision at that moment, to remove all apprehension that he worshipped Christ as God. “And he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God,

and *Jesus standing on the right hand of God*, and said : Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing *on the right hand of God*." Now for one, I am unable to imagine that Stephen could have worshipped, as God, a person whom he so carefully distinguishes from God, and whom he saw standing *on the right hand of God*. That he should have addressed him, and said what he did to him, is perfectly rational : "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ;" for he saw him in a state of power and glory, and able therefore to welcome his departing soul to heaven. Jesus himself had said : "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and *receive you* unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." But whatever power and glory he had, arose from the fact, not that he possessed them himself intrinsically, but that *he stood on the right hand of God*.

He is recorded to have uttered the expression, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," *before* he knelt down. After this we read, "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." There is nothing in these words to determine whether they were addressed to God or to Christ, as the term Lord is an appellation in the Scriptures applied to God, to Christ, and to inferior beings. Most probably it was addressed to God, and is similar to the prayer of Christ upon the cross : "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Or even if it were addressed to Christ, it

would be far from proving that Stephen worshipped him as God; for he, with the Apostles, considered Jesus to have received power from God, after his ascension, sufficient to establish his religion, and punish his enemies.

This instance of alleged worship to Christ, brings up a class of texts, which are said to show that the early Christians made a practice of worshipping Christ. As strong a case of it as there is, occurs in a vision of Ananias, at Damascus, at the time of Paul's conversion. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all *that call upon thy name.*" It is maintained, that this means, "who are worshippers of thee."

This would be an argument of some strength, if the expression, "to call on the name" of any one, were restricted to the meaning of worship. But this is not the case. It has likewise the meaning of *professing a religion*, of *taking a name*, &c. To see what is the force of this species of phraseology, I shall bring up several instances in which it occurs. James says, in his speech at the council at Jerusalem: "Simeon hath declared how God, at the first, did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people *for his name*," to receive and profess the true religion. A few verses onward he says: "That the residue of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles *upon whom my name is called*;" that is, who shall call themselves, and be called my people; who shall profess



my religion. This last is a quotation from the Old Testament. There is in it another passage of similar import. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another *shall call himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and *surname himself by the name of Israel.*" This, of course, refers to converts to the Jewish faith. They will take upon themselves the name of Jehovah, that is, profess the worship of the true God; and take the name of Jacob, that is, call themselves Israelites. And this throws no little light on the forms of baptism in the New Testament. The Christians, on being converted from Paganism, took upon themselves the name of God, and of Christ, and called themselves Christians.

There is a passage in Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, which bears a strong resemblance to the one we are considering. "Let every one that *nameth the name of Christ*, depart from iniquity;" not every one who worshippeth Christ, but any one who professes to be a Christian. Another from the Epistle of James sustains the same view. "Do they not blaspheme *that worthy name by which ye are called?*" that is, the name of Christians.

Still further, to learn what Ananias means, when he says, "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name," let us consider, that *worshipping Christ*, is not the point in question, but it is *professing Christianity*. It was not their worshipping Christ, that made them obnoxious to Paul and the Jewish Sanhedrim, but *their acknowledg-*

*ing him as the Messiah.* What the phrase really means, is further indicated by a slight change which the same writer makes in it, when he uses it a little afterward : “ But all who heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them that called on *this* name in Jerusalem ?” Men do not worship names, they are called by them. Is it not evident, that the sense would have been much better expressed by this form of words : “ Is not this he, that destroyed them which are called by this name in Jerusalem ?” meaning those who profess this faith.

I have thus, in this lecture, stated to you the antecedent improbability of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the presumption there is in favor of the divine Unity. I have brought forward some of the strongest passages which are alleged to prove the Deity of Christ, and of course the Trinity ; and by analyzing them, attempted to show you, that they do not establish the doctrine, and have, in some cases, a bearing directly the opposite way. I have examined the proofs that the early Christians were in the habit of worshipping Christ, and found them unsatisfactory. In my judgment, there is nothing, in all the arguments we have examined, to shake the doctrine, that God is One in every sense, one Essence, one Spirit, one Intelligence, one Person, “ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But let every one weigh the evidence for himself.

## LECTURE III.

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### FIRST CHAPTER OF JOHN.

#### JOHN, I. 1.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND  
THE WORD WAS GOD.

THE method which I shall adopt, in explaining to you the passage of Scripture selected for this evening, will be this. As it is thought to be one of the main arguments for the Trinity, I shall first give it the Trinitarian exposition, and then state my reasons for not acquiescing in it. Then I shall give what I conceive to be the true meaning, and my reasons for adopting it. The main difference between the Unitarian and Trinitarian exposition of this passage is, that the Trinitarian considers the Word to be a *person*, the Unitarian a *personification*, that is, the representation of a thing, as if it possessed personal attributes. In order to be entirely fair, I shall give the paraphrase of Dr. Doddridge, a Trinitarian commentator on the New Testament. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In the beginning, before the foundation of the world, or the first production of any created being, a glorious Person existed, who

(on account of the perfections of his nature, and his being in time the medium of divine manifestations to us), may be properly called the Word of God. And the Word was originally with God, the Father of all : so that to him the words of Solomon might justly be applied : “ He was by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight.” Nay, by a generation which none can declare, and a union which none can fully conceive, the Word was himself God ; that is, possessed of a nature truly and properly divine.

“ The same was in the beginning with God.” I repeat it again, that the condescension of his incarnation may be the more attentively considered, this divine Word was in the beginning with God, and by virtue of his most intimate union with him, was possessed of infinite glory and felicity. “ All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” And when it pleased God to begin the work of creation, all things in the compass of nature were made by him, even by this almighty Word, and without him was not anything made, not so much as one single being, whether among the noblest or the meanest of God’s various works.

“ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” That fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity, which was in him, was the fountain of life to the whole creation : and it is in particular our concern to remember, that the life which was in him was the light of men, as all the light of reason and revelation was the effect of his energy on the mind.

“ And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness



comprehendeth it not.” And the light long shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses ; and it still shineth in darkness, even on the minds of the most ignorant and prejudiced part of mankind ; and yet the darkness was so gross that it opposed its passage, and such was the prevailing degeneracy of their hearts, that they did not apprehend it, or regard its dictates, in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led them.

“ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.” As this was the case for many ages, the Divine Wisdom was pleased to interpose in these latter days, by a clearer and fuller discovery ; and for this purpose, a man, whose name was John, afterwards called the Baptist, was sent as a messenger from God ; of whose miraculous conception and important ministry, a more particular account is also here given. But here, it may be sufficient to observe in general, that though he was himself, in an inferior sense, “ a burning and a shining light,” yet he came only under the character of a servant, and for a witness, that he might testify concerning Christ, the true light, that all, who heard his discourses, might, by his means, be engaged to believe and follow that divine illumination.

“ He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” And accordingly, he most readily confessed, that he himself was not that light, but only came to bear witness concern-

ing it. The true light, of which he spake, was Christ, even that Sun of righteousness, and source of truth, which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man, dispersing his beams, as it were, from one end of the heavens to the other, to the Gentile, which was in midnight darkness, as well as to the Jews, who enjoyed but a kind of twilight.

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not.” He was in the world in a human form; and though the world was made by him, yet the world knew and acknowledged him not. Yea, he came to his own territories, even to the Jewish nation, which was under such obligations to him, and to whom he had been so expressly promised as their great Messiah; yet his own people did not receive him as they ought; but, on the contrary, treated him in the most contemptuous and ungrateful manner.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Nevertheless, the detriment was theirs, and it was unspeakably great to them; for to as many as received him, and by a firm and lively faith believed on his name, even to all of them, without any exception of even the poorest or the vilest, he granted the glorious privilege of becoming sons of God; that is, he adopted them into God’s family, so that they became entitled to the present immunities, and the future eternal inheritance

of his children. And they, who thus believed on him, were possessed of these privileges, not in consequence of their being born of blood, of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision and the blood of sacrifices ; nor could they ascribe it merely to the will of the flesh, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness, as if by the power of corrupted nature alone they had made themselves to differ ; nor to the will of man, nor to the wisest advice and most powerful exhortations which their fellow creatures might address to them ; but must humbly acknowledge that they were born of God, and indebted to the efficacious influences of his regenerating grace for all their privileges and all their hopes.

“ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” And, in order to raise us sinful creatures to such illustrious dignity and happiness, the divine and eternal Word, that glorious Person whom we mentioned above, by a most amazing condescension was made flesh, that is, united himself to our inferior and miserable nature, with all its innocent infirmities ; and he not only made us a transient visit for an hour or a day, but for a considerable time pitched his tabernacle among us on earth ; and we, who are now recording those things, contemplated his glory with so strict an attention, that, from our own personal knowledge, we can bear our testimony to it, that it was in every respect such a glory as became the only begotten of the Father : for it shone forth, not merely in that radiant appearance which in-

vested him on the mount of transfiguration, and in the splendor of his miracles, but in all his temper, ministration, and conduct, through the whole series of his life, in which he appeared full of grace and truth ; that is, as he was in himself most benevolent and upright, so he made the amplest discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not do, and exhibited the most important and substantial blessings, whereas that was, at best, but a shadow of good things to come.”

Such is the paraphrase of Dr. Doddridge, one of the most learned and fair of Trinitarian commentators.

I will now state my objections to this construction of this celebrated passage. In the first place, “ *The Word* ” is not the name of a person, but of a thing. As a person, it would be the introduction of something entirely new. The question occurs, If it be a thing, *whose* word is it, by which all things were created ? and the legitimate Scriptural answer is, God’s word. There is no such person as the Word made known to us in any other part of the Bible. In the second place, if you make it a person, you introduce the greatest confusion into the very first sentence. You cannot even conceive of an intelligible meaning to it. You cannot even conceive of a Person who was *with* God, and *was* God at the same time. According to the Trinitarian construction, the Word was the second Person of the Trinity. In that case you must make God stand for the first Person of the Trinity, or for the whole Deity, without distinction of Persons. In the one case,



it will be saying, that the second Person was with the first Person, and was the first Person ; or in the other, it will be saying, the second Person was with the whole Deity, and was the whole Deity. Now neither of these meanings of the term Word, makes intelligible sense. We are driven then by the very language, to make Word a personification of the divine attributes, instead of a real person.

In the third place, if we make the Word the second Person of a Trinity, we make the first Person almost entirely uninteresting to us, indeed to have little or nothing to do with us. The second Person made the Universe, and all things in it. He made us, for by him was *every* thing made that was made. The Person, who made the universe, sustains and governs it. And when you have said this, you have made the first Person entirely quiescent. He has no relation to us. He is not an object of prayer, for he is not our Creator, nor Disposer, nor can he interpose for our benefit, except as an intercessor with the second Person, who is, in fact, the Maker and the Ruler of all things. Now this is contradictory, not only to all sound theism, but to Trinitarianism itself. According to that system, the second Person *is sent by* the first, to be a Mediator between himself and mankind.

My fourth objection is, that according to the Trinitarian theory, the Word, the second Person in the Trinity, after the incarnation, became so united to the human nature of Christ, as to form one Person, and in this form, the world is reproached for not recognizing him as its Creator. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”

Now, considering the Word as a person, this reproach is without point. There was nothing about Christ, *personally*, to lead the world even to suspect that he was its Creator, or that he had more than a human nature, aided by the wisdom and the power of God. “He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and had not where to lay his head.” He suffered pain, was crucified, commended his spirit into the hands of God, and died. There was nothing in all this to convince mankind that he was the Creator of the world, but every thing to convince them that he was not. He never made any such pretension. The Creator and Governor of the world might have wrought miracles by his own power, if he had chosen to do so ; and if it had been any part of his purpose to convince the world that he was its Creator, Christ would have let the world know, that he wrought miracles by his own power. But he says, “Of mine own self I can do nothing.” “The *Father* that dwelleth *in* me, he doeth the works.” At the grave of Lazarus, he does not pretend to raise him by his own power, but says, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe” — what ? that I am the Creator of the world ? no, but “*that thou hast sent me.*” This was the ground upon which Christ claimed the attention and obedience of the world, that God had sent him ; not that he was the Creator of the world, but that he had been sent and commissioned *by* the Creator of the world. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true

God, *and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*” The only true God can be none other than the Creator. If Christ *is* the Creator, then he is the only true God *to us*. Any other God is nothing to us, for he can have nothing to do with us. It could *not* have been a matter of reproach to the world, that they did not recognize Christ as their Creator, as there was nothing in him to make them think so, and he himself never made any such pretension. But if we interpret the term “Word” to mean an attribute, or several attributes of God, personified, then the passage will make sense, and carry some point in its reproach. If we make it mean the divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which in fact constitute the very essence of God, then the passage would justly reproach the world for not recognizing in Christ the same divine power and wisdom which made the world.

My fifth objection to the Trinitarian apprehension of this passage, is found in the fourteenth verse. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Now if we suppose the Word to have been God, *personally*, in any sense, the most irreconcilable inconsistencies will follow. “God became a man,” which contradicts the very definition of God, that he is unchangeable, and *cannot* become any thing. “And we beheld his glory,” not original and underived, as the glory of God must be, but subordinate and derived, “the glory,” literally, “as of an only begotten son with his father, full of grace and truth.” Now the very idea of God’s becom-

ing a man, is totally shocking. Scarcely less so is it, that the Creator of the world should be united, in one person, with a human body and a human soul, and in that condition *receive* glory from a higher being still. Such difficulties are to my mind, I confess, totally insuperable. They seem utterly irreconcilable with any clear conception of the nature of either God or man. I can conceive of divine attributes being with God, and constituting God, and being displayed in creation and revelation, and being especially manifested in Jesus Christ, so as to clothe him with glory, and make him to appear to be the peculiar favorite of heaven ; but I cannot conceive of a Divine Person to do all this.

My sixth objection is taken from the fourteenth verse, taken in connection with the seventeenth. In the seventeenth verse, one special part of his glory seems to be, that, as the “only begotten,” he was “full of grace and truth.” In the seventeenth verse, this pre-eminence is said not to reside in his *person*, but in his *revelation* : “For the *law* was given by Moses, but *grace* and *truth* came by Jesus Christ.” There is no difference of *nature* intimated here between Moses and Christ, nor any difference in the *relation* which they sustained to man. The *law* was given by Moses, by God of course *through* Moses, and *grace* and *truth* came by Jesus Christ, from God of course through Christ. This contrast, to my mind, explains the strong language of this whole chapter. In the creation, and in the Mosaic revelation, God was revealed and made known ; but so much more perfect is the knowledge we obtain of him through Christ, that he may almost be said to be the tabernacle in which he dwelt.



My seventh objection, is the reason which John the Baptist gives for Christ's superiority to himself. "This was he of whom I spake: He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me." And so was Moses, and David, and so were the angels, before John the Baptist; but priority in time proved no superiority. He should have said, if it were true, "because he is the Almighty, and I am a man." But the true meaning of this passage is totally overlooked by all parties. It is a figure of speech, drawn from the way in which servants used to walk in relation to their masters. They went *behind*. And it all amounts to this, and nothing more. "There is one coming *behind* me, who ought to go *before* me, for he is my superior." And he means precisely the same thing that he did when he said, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."\*

John the historian goes on to give the reason and the measure of his superiority to John the Baptist. "*For*

\* It was the office of a servant to go behind his master, to carry his shoes when he went to feasts, to substitute them for his sandals when he arrived, and to stoop down and put them on and off. The figure turns on the two adverbs *before* and *behind*, and on the fact that Jesus appeared *after* John, though his superior. "One is coming *after* me as my servant, who ought to go *before* me as my master. Indeed, I am not worthy to be his servant, 'to bear his shoes,' according to one Evangelist; or 'to unloose them,' according to another. As authority for rendering *πρωτος μου*, my superior, we have the same use of it in a sentence of Paul. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, *ὡς πρωτος ἐμι*, of whom I am first," not in point of time, but chief in point of eminence. Indeed, we have the same sense reported by Matthew, in which for *πρωτος μου*, is substituted *ισχυροτερος μου*, *mightier* than I. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, literally *behind* me, is *mightier* than I, whose shoes I am not *worthy* to bear."

of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." It is through Christ that we receive the greater fulness of divine revelation, in proportion as he received a more full and perfect revelation from God than Moses. Such a reason would hardly be given by one who knew his real superiority to be derived from his *nature*, and not from his *endowments*. Such a reason for Christ's superiority to Moses, as the greater perfection of his revelation, coming immediately after this discourse about the Word, is certainly out of place, if that superiority were in fact owing to the incarnation of a Person of the Trinity in him ; for it was not the true reason. It all goes to show, that the incarnation of the Word is a figure of speech, precisely similar to that which we make use of when we say, of a wise man, that he is an *incarnation* of wisdom, or wisdom has taken up her abode in him. And it all amounts to this, that revelation, imperfectly imparted before, seemed to become incarnate in Christ. The word of God came to the ancient prophets from time to time, but it seems to have *dwelt* in Jesus fully and permanently, like a person. In him became incarnate the very *spirit of revelation*. It seems to me to be a highly figurative and poetic mode of representing what is elsewhere simply and plainly expressed. "He, whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, for God *giveth* him the spirit *not by measure*." What is called in the one case the indwelling of the Word, is in the other called the fulness of the Spirit.

My eighth reason, for thinking that the Word was not a person of the Trinity, or a person at all, is found in

the eighteenth verse. "No one hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." At first sight of this passage, the Trinitarian would say, perhaps, that he had found a strong confirmation of his hypothesis. The Son in the bosom of the Father, is equivalent to the Word being with God. But if he examines it more closely, he will find that it amounts to a contradiction of his theory. The Father, here spoken of, is not the Father which his theory requires. The Father which his theory requires, is the First Person of a Trinity. The Father here spoken of, is the whole Deity, without distinction of Persons, and is used as synonymous with God in the former part of the sentence: "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," that is, in the bosom of God, "he hath declared him." To be in the bosom of another, is an Orientalism, signifying not to participate in his nature, but his counsels. It is derived from the mode in the East of sitting at table, or rather of reclining on couches at the table, in such a manner that the head of the person who reclined on the right hand, came near the bosom of him who reclined on the left, and thus they were in most intimate intercourse. Thus John, at the last supper, reclined on the bosom of Jesus; that is, was next him at table. As an admirable illustration of this whole subject, I refer you to John's account of the last supper. Jesus had said, "that one of his disciples should betray him." "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved." Not that it was

any thing wonderful for him to recline on his master's breast, for they all did the same at the table to each other, but it merely means to say, that *John sat next to Jesus at table*, so that he could communicate with him privately if he chose. "Simon Peter beckoned to him," literally nodded to him, "to ask who this might be, of whom he spake. He leaning over the breast of Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, It is he, to whom I shall give a morsel, when I have dipped it." To be in the bosom of any one, is not to partake of his nature, but of his counsels, to have a most intimate knowledge of his mind and will, not by identity of being or of consciousness, but by freedom of communication. All this is perfectly consistent with the *impersonality* of the Word, but inconsistent with its *personality*. The Word, considered as a Person of the Trinity, *cannot* derive knowledge from God, cannot, in Oriental phrase, be in the bosom of the Father. And here has been a great source of error in the interpretation of the Bible. Coming to it with the Trinitarian hypothesis, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, people have taken it for granted, that Father, when applied to God, means the first Person of a Trinity, instead of the whole Deity, without distinction of Persons. But a little examination would convince them, that there is no such meaning in the Bible.

Such, then, are a few among many objections to considering the term Word, in the beginning of John, to mean a person. To me they are sufficient to make me reject such an hypothesis; but I leave each one to judge for himself. How then is it to be interpreted?



I shall go on to paraphrase it in the manner of Dr. Doddridge. Justice cannot be done to it in a translation, as by the arrangement of the genders, in Greek, to correspond to the terminations of words instead of the nature of things, Word, in that language, is masculine, though the name of a thing, and has masculine pronouns, adjectives and articles, to agree with it.

I would first premise, that whatever there is peculiar in this introduction to John's Gospel, cannot be vital to salvation, because the Gospel of John was written long after the rest, and they were not collected in one volume for many ages afterwards, so that thousands of men were made Christians, and lived and died such, without knowing one word of the first fourteen verses of John's Gospel.

I would premise, moreover, that in the view that I shall give of this passage, I shall make John the interpreter of his own writings. I shall go to the introduction to his first Epistle, for an explanation of the introduction to his Gospel. The same thing which he there speaks of in the masculine gender, he introduces, in his Epistle, in the neuter, and in the feminine. "*That* which was from the beginning, which we have heard, and which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it," literally her, "and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life, which," literally she, "was *with* the Father and was manifested to us." Now it is evident from this, that what is called the "Word" in the Gospel, is called in the

Epistle the “Word of life.” Then it is called “the Life,” which in Greek is feminine. But still she was *with* God, under the same phraseology that the Word was, and was manifested to men. Now it seems impossible, to my mind, to believe that John meant to say, that “eternal Life” was a person with God, and in God; yet it is just as strongly asserted, as that the Word was. The “word of life,” and “eternal life,” which was with the Father, and was manifested to the disciples, we have no difficulty in interpreting to mean the doctrines and commission of Christ, which he received from God, and which were the means of conferring eternal life on those who received them. Why then should we have any hesitation in taking the term Word in the same signification, which dwelt in Christ, or, to use a more familiar phrase, became incarnate in him? I take then the whole passage to mean this. The word which God spake by Christ, the revelation which he made of himself, through him, is nothing new, but is a part of a series of revelations running back to the very beginning of all things. The same Almighty Power, and Perfect Wisdom, which were displayed in the miracles and doctrines of Christ, were first manifested in the works of the physical creation: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” The next manifestation was in the creation of the soul of man, to which he imparted, in a fainter degree than that in which they exist in himself, some of his own attributes: “The inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding.” “In him, or rather it, was life, and that

life was the light of men. But the light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." The revelation which God made of himself in the material world, and in the soul of man, was not understood, and the world fell into idolatry. The next revelation that God made of himself, was to the Jewish nation, by which he took a particular people and made them his own, brought them into an especial relation to himself. After a long interval, he visited his own people by another revelation, but they did not recognize him in it. He sent John the Baptist, to announce the coming of his last and greatest revelation to man ; and at length in Christ himself, that Light, which had ever been shining, burst out with greater brilliancy ; that Life, which had ever been the source of intellectual energy to men, received a more perfect development ; that Word, which had been sounding in the ears of mortals since the beginning of time, from the works of God, from the heavens above and from the earth beneath, received a more full and articulate annunciation.

Such I believe to be the meaning of the introduction to John's Gospel. I think it satisfies the language, at the same time that it is more consistent and probable in itself. It is more simple, and agrees better with the acknowledged facts of the case. If you interpret the Word to mean a person, then you involve yourself in the most inextricable difficulties and perplexities. If you identify him with the Son, the second Person of a Trinity, and make him, according to the common phraseology, the Divine nature of Christ, you find it to correspond neither with the one nor the other.

You not only create plurality in the Divine Being, but you introduce a Person into the Divine Being not possessed of the essential attributes of Deity. The Son is not omniscient. He knows not when the day of judgment is to be. The Son is not self-existent, but a derived, dependent being. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* the Son to have life in himself." He was dependent, not on the Father, which would be inadmissible, but on "the only true God," for the glory he had before the foundation of the world. After the termination of his mediatorial office, the Son is to be subjected, not to the Father, but to *God*, that God may be all in all. Such attributes must the Word possess, if you identify it with what is called the Son in the Trinity.

Quite as difficult do you find it, when you attempt to identify such a person as the Word in Christ. According to the strange phraseology of Trinitarianism, the Word, which was a Divine *Person* in God, becomes a Divine *nature* in Christ. How he should be represented as losing his personality in becoming incarnate, is not readily comprehended, unless from foresight of the difficulties which would be involved in supposing that Christ was made up of two *persons*, as well as two natures. But the instinctive good sense of mankind has avoided the inconceivable idea that Christ was composed of two *persons*, one finite and the other infinite, by substituting the more indefinite word *nature*. But nature, in this connection, if it mean any more than office, function, capacity, *must* mean persons, and if so, what were the elements of the complex person, Christ?



An infinite Spirit, which filled immensity and eternity, and a finite spirit, which began to exist in Bethlehem, in the days of Augustus Cæsar, — a consciousness which embraced all things that can be known in the Universe, and another consciousness which embraced that narrow circle of ideas only, which is taken in by the human faculties ; a will which could sway the Universe, and one which could only act through a human body. Is it possible than any person can believe in the amalgamation of such contradictory elements into one Person ? The human, of course, must be lost in the Divine, like a drop of water in the ocean. But what adds to the wonder, this amalgamation is not permanent. The real person of Christ, in which he speaks and teaches, has the power of sliding out of one into the other, whenever he chooses, and of sometimes speaking as God, and sometimes as man, without giving any notice that he makes the change ; so that his hearers and readers were, and are, according to this hypothesis, obliged to pick out of his discourses, at their own discretion, those things which he said as God, and those things which he said as man, and what he said as both God and man, — of course, are always in the dark as to what they are taking on divine, and what on human authority.

I adopt the interpretation of the impersonality of the Word, because it corresponds best with the general representations of the Scriptures. Jesus was born, and *increased in wisdom*, which could hardly happen to a being of whose person an omniscient God made a part. He commenced teaching, not because any

Divine Power made a constitutional element of him, but because he was *visited by the Spirit of God*. "He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness," which contradicts the idea of the Word's being a person. It is said of him, "that God giveth the spirit unto him not by measure." He says of himself, "I, by the spirit of God, cast out devils." If there were such a person in Christ as the Word, he was certainly quiescent during his whole ministry ; and if the Holy Ghost is a person, he is the person who was in Christ and wrought his miracles. And if the Holy Ghost is not a person, and by the Spirit is meant the power of God, then God, without distinction of Persons, wrought his miracles, which is perfectly consistent with the Scriptures, but destroys the doctrine of the Trinity. This is precisely in accordance with the representation of Peter. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, and signs, and wonders, which *God* did *by* him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves do know." On another occasion, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for *God* was *with* him." From all these passages, and many others that I might cite, it seems evident, that what is in the introduction of John called the Word, means nothing more than the Divine aid and power, that full measure of wisdom and control over nature, which is, in other places, called "the fulness of the Spirit," and which fitted Jesus for his great office of Mediator between God and men.

This personification of the attributes of God, and representation of them as God himself, was not introduced by John in his Gospel. It was familiar to the Jews before. It is found in the Old Testament, and in the Apocrypha. In the eighth chapter of Proverbs, Wisdom is personified, just as the Word is in the Gospel of John. But by the structure of the Hebrew language, Wisdom is feminine, just as Wisdom is masculine in Greek. She is represented as a female, going up and down the earth, endeavoring to persuade men to be wise. “Doth not Wisdom cry, and *understanding* put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entering in of the city, at the coming in of the doors. Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.”

That no real person is intended, appears from the whole structure of the chapter; from the word *understanding*, which is introduced as synonymous, and especially from these verses: “Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”

She then goes on to identify herself with wisdom as it exists in the minds of men, and there seems to be a strong parallelism between the mode of speech here used, and one clause of the introduction of John. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” What is Wisdom in the one case, is Word in the other.

“By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.”

Afterwards she identifies herself with wisdom in the mind of God. As she had represented herself as having a personal form, as the monitor of mankind and the counsellor of princes, so she gives herself a personal existence with God, from all eternity, because God is the primeval fountain of all wisdom. In the same manner, John represents the Word as “being with God, and being God.” Wisdom proceeds, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there.” The reader here will observe, that Wisdom is not represented as being the agent in the creation of the world, but only as being present. In the introduction to the Gospel of John, the divine attributes, personified under the term Word, are represented as the actual Agent in bringing all things into existence, or are identified with God himself, because, in the Old Testament, God is represented as having *spoken* all things into being. “By the *word of the Lord* were the heavens made, and all the host of them by *the breath* of his mouth.” Wisdom proceeds: “When he established



the clouds above ; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep ; when he gave the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment ; when he appointed the foundations of the earth ; then was I by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men." That all this is a mere personification, appears not only from the whole strain of the passage, but from what follows. " Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children ; for blessed are they that keep my ways. *Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.*"

In the book of Ecclesiasticus, a part of the Apocrypha, composed several ages before Christ, but after the closing of the Old Testament, we have a similar personification of Wisdom. " Wisdom shall praise herself, and shall glory in the midst of her people. In the congregation of the Most High shall she open her mouth, and triumph before his power. *I came out of the mouth of the Most High,* and covered the earth as a cloud. I dwelt in high places, and my throne is the cloudy pillar. I alone compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the bottom of the deep. In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth, and in every people and nation, I got a possession." This, the reader will perceive, bears a close analogy to the phraseology of John, in which he calls the Word " the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." What succeeds, bears an equally strong analogy to that part of John's introduction, in which he says, that divine

illumination, though pervading the minds of the whole human race, was peculiarly imparted to the Jews. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." Wisdom goes on to say : "Lo, the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and he that made me, caused my tabernacle to rest, and said ; Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel."

There is likewise in the Wisdom of Solomon, a personification of the Word of God, represented as sent from heaven, a gigantic destroyer of the Egyptians, on the night when all their first-born were destroyed. "Thine Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war, into the midst of a land of destruction. And brought thine unfeigned commandment, as a sharp sword, and standing up, filled all things with death, and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth."

From these quotations the reader will perceive that the personification of the attributes of God, in the Gospel of John, was nothing new, but was already known to the Jews in their own sacred and theological writings.

## LECTURE IV.

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### PROPHECIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### ISAIAH, IX. 6.

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN, AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER; AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE.

THERE are few passages in the Bible, which have been so often quoted to prove the doctrine of the Trinity as this. It is proper then, that, in treating of that subject, we should give this text a particular consideration.

Before entering into the discussion, however, it will be proper to premise, that we go into the Old Testament, for arguments in favor of the Trinity, with the strongest presumption against the probability of finding any there, from the fact that no such doctrine was ever discovered in it by the Jews themselves. During the fifteen hundred years of their national existence, no idea of a Trinity ever entered the mind of any pious descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and no scholar of Moses ever thought of giving any other than the most strict and literal construction to the first of all

the commandments : “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah your God, Jehovah is One.” This was long before the hostility sprung up, which has existed between the Jews and Christians, on account of the fact that the Christians have received as the Messiah, him whom the Jews rejected and crucified. If there were such a doctrine, it must certainly have been revealed in the language of the Old Testament. This language was the vernacular tongue of the Jews. If it was revealed, and was an important doctrine, then it was important that they should understand it. But they did *not* understand it. The descendants of those Jews, who have inherited those Scriptures, and who derive their religion solely from them, are as strenuous as were their forefathers on the fundamental article of their faith. And is it a supposable case, that those who live in a remote age, and speak another language, should discover a fundamental doctrine in the Hebrew Scriptures, which the Hebrews themselves, who spoke the language, did not discover ; a doctrine, too, which apparently contradicts the first principles of their religion contained in their Scriptures ?

If the doctrine of the Trinity were true and important, we could scarce conceive of any way in which Moses could have discharged his office as the lawgiver of the Jews, in a manner more calculated to mislead them. At the very commencement of his mission, he represents the Deity to have appeared to him under the similitude of a burning bush, and to have given the name by which he wished to make himself known to the Jews, as “I AM,” a name which in itself expresses



the simplest mode of personal existence, and into which it is impossible for any idea of plurality to creep. I know of *no* language which he could have used, which would have conveyed the idea more definitely, not only of an essential, but a *personal* unity. It is true, that the attempt has been made, to deduce a different conclusion from one passage in Genesis, where God is said to have deliberated about making man, and about the treatment of him after he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." But it is only necessary to observe, that Moses represents the person who makes the speech, in the singular number ; "And God said ;" showing plainly that there is no inconsistency meant to be conveyed, with the personal unity of God, but that it is a mere idiom of speech, not peculiar indeed to the Hebrew, but common to all languages. There is not a monarch in Europe, who might not be proved to be plural, on the same principles, for they all say, "We." Editors of newspapers even, adopt the same form of speech, and we all, in our most common intercourse, address each other in the plural number ; and if idioms were always to be taken in proof of facts, it might be proved that we believed each other to be made up of many persons, when we say to each other : "You are good, or, you are wise, &c." The Germans carry this matter further, and address each other as not only in the plural number, but in the third person. "They are good, they are wise," meaning the very person whom they address. Is there anything like plurality intimated in the following most solemn and impressive language ?

“ And God spake to Moses, and said unto him, *I am Jehovah.* And *I* appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by *my* name Jehovah was I not known to them.” Then, as to the Deity of the Messiah being a doctrine of Moses, let us read the following prophecy, which foretells him, if anything in his writings does predict him. “ The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, *of thy brethren*, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken.” Now, certainly no Jew could ever have deduced from this, that the Messiah should participate in the Divine Nature, since God was to raise him up from his brethren like unto Moses.

Besides all these express declarations, how often is the personal unity of God asserted, by implication, in the Old Testament, and of course his personal plurality denied ! In how many hundreds and hundreds of instances is Jehovah introduced as saying “ I,” “ my,” “ me.” These are all personal pronouns, and applicable to only one person. How many addresses are there in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, to God in the singular number, with the pronouns “ thee ” and “ thou ” ? Every one of these is an argument for the personal Unity of God, and goes to show, that any other doctrine was not so much as known or thought of. And yet we hear, at the present day, as Scriptural and legitimate, such ascriptions as this : “ Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” In the beginning !

When did it begin ? There is nothing like this in the Old Testament, so there are near four thousand years taken at once from the beginning, which makes the beginning very late in the history of the world, according to my estimation. Then there was no glory ascribed to the Holy Ghost for nearly four hundred years after Christ, so that there are four hundred years taken from the beginning of Christianity, before this mode of worship came into practice in the Church. All we can say of the tripersonal nature of God, as an article of faith with the Jewish nation, is, that there is no trace of any such belief in the Old Testament, and that the general representation there is of one Person, and of one only.

But the passage we are examining this evening, is considered as a prophecy of the incarnation of the second Person of a Trinity in Jesus of Nazareth. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his *name* shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” This is thought to prove, that Jesus of Nazareth had two natures, one human and the other divine. I shall now state my reasons for not acquiescing in such a conclusion. And my first reason is, that there is nothing in the passage which touches the nature of the child at all, or intimates that its nature has anything peculiar in it. It only gives its *name*. It will be recollected, that this prophecy is nowhere applied to Jesus, nor claimed for him, by any writer in the New Testament. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” The question instantly occurs,

*Who* gave it? The answer is, God. And for what purpose? "The government shall be upon his shoulder." He is to be a king, and rule over his people for their good. "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it, with judgment and justice, from henceforth, even forever." Jehovah born, and seated upon the throne of David! Impossible. And is the prince, who is to be thus exalted, to do all this by his *own* power? By no means. "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." The only thing, which has any appearance of intimating any superiority of nature in this child that is to be born, is, that "he will order and establish his throne *forever*." But we find that this proves nothing, for the very same language is used by God to David concerning Solomon. "And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. *He shall build me a house*, and I will establish his throne *forever*. I will be *his Father*, and he shall be *my Son*; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom *forever*, and his throne shall be established *forevermore*." If the words "forever," and "evermore," prove a divine nature in the child spoken of by Isaiah, so they must likewise prove a divine nature in Solomon; and if they do not in Solomon, neither do they in the son that is to be born, and the child that is given. It may be as



well to remark, as we pass, the use of the terms "son of God," and "Father," as applied to God in correspondence with it. A pretty strong case might be made out from this passage for the divinity of Solomon. "I will be his Father, and he shall be my son, and I will establish his throne forever." Such passages ought to convince us how slow we ought to be in conforming the nature of things to the strong figures of the Bible.

My second objection is, that the epithet "mighty God," is so far from proving anything as to the nature of the child to which it is prophetically given, that it is applied to Nebuchadnezzar, to departed spirits, and to brave men. It is perhaps material to say, that the particle "the," prefixed to mighty God, has no countenance in the original. The word *el* is not the especial name of Jehovah. It is from a root, which signifies strength and power, such as is usually possessed by the heroes of the early history of every country. It was therefore applied not only to God, but to heroes and to kings. It is applied to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The prophet is describing the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, and predicting that he would subdue Egypt. Ezekiel upbraids Pharaoh for his pride, and tells him that he shall be given into the hand of the mighty conqueror of the nations. "I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one," literally, mighty God, "of the nations, and he shall deal with him." If mighty god, proved a divine nature in the person to whom it was applied, then Nebuchadnezzar had a divine nature. In the next

chapter it is applied by the prophet to the shades of departed kings and heroes, in the deep and dark abodes of the dead. Pharaoh is represented as going down to the place of the dead, a vast world under the earth, corresponding in extent with the space above the earth, and there he is met by the great and powerful who had gone before him. "The strong among the mighty shall speak to thee out of the midst of hell;" literally, "the mighty gods shall speak to thee out of the midst of hell." Now it is in vain to speak of mighty gods being in hell, but yet it must be so, if *el gebor* is made to mean God, in the ninth chapter of Isaiah.

Another instance of the use of this word for human beings, when no divinity can possibly be intended, is found in the forty-first chapter of Job. Speaking of the Behemoth, he says: "When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid;" literally, "the mighty gods are afraid." Now, no one would think of interpreting this to mean persons possessing a divine nature. It merely means the most courageous of mankind, the mightiest heroes, are afraid to encounter Behemoth when he is roused up.

Now it is the same term precisely, which is applied to the child who is to be born, and to exercise the kingly function, and it designates one of the qualities which is to fit him for the office, — that he is to be a hero, to lead in difficulty and danger.

A third objection is found in the epithet, Everlasting Father. This proves too much for Trinitarianism itself. That theory affirms the incarnation of the second Per-

son in the Trinity, the Son, but denies the incarnation of the Father, and denies the incarnation of the whole Deity, without distinction of persons. But if the child *is* God, because it is *called* mighty god, then it is the everlasting Father, because it is *called* Everlasting Father. If this phrase prove any incarnation, it is that of the Father. But the incarnation of the Father, according to the Trinitarian hypothesis, would overthrow the whole economy of redemption. According to that theory, it was necessary, nay, was a matter of compact, that the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, should come upon earth and assume our nature, that he might, in that nature, satisfy the justice of the Father, and make atonement for the sins of the world. But if the everlasting Father came on earth, then there was no one left to whom the atonement could be made, unless it were the Son, and that would be reversing the order of the compact. So far then from sustaining the doctrine of the Trinity, this epithet, and of course the whole passage, contradicts it.

As an appellation of a sovereign, as this child is represented to be destined to be, it is far more rational to interpret it of him in that capacity, and make him the perpetual father of his people, not of course defining perpetual in the sense of eternal, but, as is the case in most of the instances in which the term everlasting occurs, of a duration to continue as long as the subject exists. The everlasting hills, means the hills which shall continue as long as the earth. The servant who had his ears bored, was to be his master's *forever*, that is, as long as he should live. So, according to

Hebrew idiom, the king, who should be a perpetual Father to his people, would reign over them with paternal care *as long as he should live*; intimating, however, that his reign would be long, and perhaps that its influences might last much longer.

Abstracting then from all theological questions which have been raised upon this passage, it would merely amount to this: The prophet declares that there is then born a child of the royal family, who is to be peculiarly gifted and qualified to resuscitate the fallen fortunes of the Jews, and therefore shall be called admirable, wise, courageous, benignant, peaceful. And this is all; and it has been thought by some of the most judicious commentators to refer to Hezekiah, who was then, it is computed, about eleven years old. There is no intimation in the New Testament that either Christ, or his Apostles, considered it to refer to him.

But all appearance of teaching anything as to the nature of the child will vanish, if we consider the habits of the Jews as to naming their children. This they did, either with reference to their personal qualities, or what they were destined to accomplish, or, more frequently, from the circumstances of their birth. So far is the name of God from proving anything as to the nature of the person to whom it is given, that almost all the names in the Old Testament beginning or ending in *el*, are some combination of the name of God; and all ending in *jah*, are combinations of the most sacred name of God, Jehovah. The list of names at the end of most of our large Bibles, will throw great light



upon this matter. Thus, David's eldest brother was called Eliab, which signifies "God the Father," or "God of my Father." The name of the prophet Elijah, in Hebrew, is "God the Lord." Ishmael, "God that hears." Lemuel, "God with them." Abiel, "God my Father." Now if the giving of these names is allowed to prove anything as to the essential nature of the children to whom they are given, there have been nearly as many incarnations in the Jewish theology as there have been in that of the Hindoos. But the fact is, that all these names prove nothing as to the nature of the children to whom they were given. It was customary for Hebrew parents to give their children names from the circumstances under which they were born, either of prosperity or adversity, which they considered as coming immediately from God. Hagar, at the command of the angel, called her son Ishmael, or "God that hears," because the Lord had heard her in her affliction. And so it is throughout the Old Testament.

The most remarkable instance, perhaps, is recorded in the seventh chapter of Isaiah. About the year seven hundred and thirty-seven before Christ, Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, became confederate, and invaded Judah. Ahaz was then king of Judah, a man of weak character ; and although, in the main, a worshipper of Jehovah, yet sometimes addicted to idolatry. He was much alarmed at the danger that threatened his country ; and Isaiah the prophet was sent to encourage and console him with the assurance, that this attempt upon his capital should

be in vain. "Take heed," says he, "and be quiet ; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal : Thus saith the Lord God ; It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." Ahaz is not much encouraged by this message, and the prophet, to confirm him, requests him to ask some token of God that what he promises shall be done, some outward manifestation of Divine power. But Ahaz refuses to ask a sign. "I will not ask," says he, "neither will I tempt the Lord." The prophet answers : "Hear ye now, O house of David. Is it a small thing for you to weary men ; but will ye weary my God also ? Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign ; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know," or until he shall know, "to choose the good and refuse the evil. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest, shall be forsaken of both her kings."

Here, then, is a child to be born, as a sign of deliverance to Ahaz, and to be called Immanuel. And why ? Because he was to be an incarnation of Jehovah ? By no means ; but because God was to defend and deliver his people before he should grow up to know good and evil. The nature of the child was to have

nothing to do with his name, nor was it on account of anything that the child was to do, that the name Immanuel was to be given to it, but on account of something that was to be done by God, before the child should be old enough to discern good and evil. The whole matter turns upon the *time* that was to elapse before the country would be fully relieved of her two enemies, and it is limited to the time in which a young woman, then unmarried, should be married, have a son, and that son should grow up to an age in which he might distinguish between good and evil.

In the very next chapter, we have a similar symbolic name applied to another child,—many theological scholars have thought, the same child. At any rate, the name of the child refers to the same event. “Moreover, the Lord said unto me, Take thou a great roll, and write in it with a man’s pen, concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And I took me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah, and I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son. Then said the Lord unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz,” speed to the prey, haste to the spoil. “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.” Here then are two symbolic names applied to two children, or perhaps to one child, to symbolize and be a pledge of the same event, that the two kings of Syria and Israel should be so pressed by the king of Assyria, that they should abandon Judea, and leave the Jews in peace.

I am not unaware, that a large portion of the Christian Church has considered the naming of the child, Immanuel, a prophecy of Christ, and an assertion, that, superadded to his human, he should have a divine nature ; but as far as I can see, without the least reason. Such a prophecy would not have answered the very purpose for which it was given, as a sign to Ahaz. "How," asks Professor Stuart, of Andover, "how could the birth of Jesus, which happened seven hundred and forty-two years afterwards, be a sign to Ahaz, that within three years his country should be freed from its enemies ? Such a child, as it would seem, was born at that period, for in the next chapter he is referred to twice, as if then present."

But it is asked, How could this transaction be referred to by Matthew, in connection with the birth of Jesus ? "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." Now nothing of this kind really took place at the birth of Jesus, and no such name was given him. The name given to him by divine command, was Jesus. God never commanded him to be called Immanuel. All then, that this citation from the Old Testament can mean, is this, that there is a similarity between the two events. Is it asked how the writers of the New Testament could quote the Old in that way, where there was no real prophecy ? We can only answer, that such was the custom at that time. The same accommodation of the language of the Old Testament to the



events of the New, occurs in the next chapter of Matthew. Joseph took the child and his mother, and fled to Egypt, and, after a season, returned ; and a reason of this movement is given, “ that it might be fulfilled that was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” Now, at first sight, you might suppose this to be a prophecy, and a prophecy fulfilled. But if we look for it in the Old Testament, we find it in the eleventh chapter of Hosea. “ When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Here, we all perceive, is no prophecy, but only an allusion to a historical fact, in which all the nation of Israel are called God’s son. Still the same language is used in both cases, “ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying.” Either both are prophecies, or the language does not prove either of them prophetical, but only to be quoted by way of coincidence and accommodation.

The inference which all of you, who have listened attentively to this argument, must have drawn, is, that the evidence in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity, to be derived from the seventh and ninth chapters of Isaiah, is exceedingly small in amount ; that small as it is, it will not bear examination for a moment. It follows, that if the Deity of Christ cannot be proved from what he was, and did, and said, in the New Testament, the attempt to establish his Deity is hopeless.

How little confidence is to be placed in arguments drawn from names, of which Jehovah makes a part, may be learned from a comparison of the sixth verse of

the twenty-third chapter of Jeremiah, with the sixteenth verse of the thirty-third chapter. “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety ; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, ‘ Jehovah our righteousness.’ ” This is appealed to as a triumphant argument for the Deity of Christ, until the reader passes on to the thirty-third chapter, and there he finds the same name applied to Jerusalem ! “In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely ; and this is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, ‘ The Lord our righteousness.’ ”

What the Jews really thought, as to the unity of God and the Deity of the Messiah, may perhaps be learned as accurately as from any other source, from two visions, which I am now about to recite, one from the sixth chapter of Isaiah, and one from Daniel. “In the year that Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphims : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of *his* glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.” Here then is the Deity, as he was conceived of by the Jews, one indivisible being, seated like a king upon a throne

Is there the least hint of anything like a Trinity about him ? Not the least shadow.

The other vision is in the seventh chapter of Daniel : “ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the fine wool : his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him : thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. I saw, in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

If there be any prophecy of Christ in the Old Testament, this is it, and I leave any one to say, if there is not a sufficient distinction kept up between the Ancient of days, on whom myriads attended, and the person in human form, who came near before him, and *received* from the Ancient of days, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom ?

Perhaps there will be no more appropriate place, in the course of these lectures, than this, to notice certain other passages of the Old Testament which have been regarded as prophetic of Christ, and have been thought at the same time to assert the doctrine of his Deity. One of the strongest of these is found in the third chap-

ter of Malachi. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight ; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner’s fire and a fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you in judgment, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

After the most careful examination of this passage, it is difficult to find any certain evidence that the Messiah is referred to at all in it. There are circumstances in it, which make the whole passage agree much better with the old dispensation than with the new, and lead the candid inquirer to refer whatever events are predicted in it, to some reformation in the times of the second temple, before the destruction of the Levitical priesthood, rather than to the new economy. This chapter is nearly connected with the preceding, and they both seem to relate to the degeneracy of the sacerdotal order, and the neglect of the appointed offerings by the people. “Will a man rob God ? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee ? In tythes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse ; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tythes into the storehouse,



that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” To carry this forward, and interpret it of the times of the Messiah, and of course to give it a spiritual meaning, seems to be wresting Scripture, rather than interpreting it. The new temple was just built, and the worship of God by sacrifice was just reëstablished, and the people had not yet become accustomed to pay the tythes ordained in the Mosaic institute, which were necessary to maintain divine service. The priests, too, had lately returned from captivity, and had brought with them wives, which they, in violation of an express law, had married from among the heathen, as we learn from the preceding chapter. “Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem : for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, *and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts,*” meaning of course the priests. It was the duty of the priest, not only to offer sacrifice, but to study the law, and honestly to interpret it to the people. In this duty the priests had failed. “But ye have departed out of the way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth ; *for he is the messenger of*

*the Lord of hosts.*” In the midst of all this complaint of the degeneracy of the priesthood, and the irregularities of the temple service, God promises, or rather threatens, to bring about a reformation. “Behold, I will send *my* messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.” As the priest is called, just before, the “messenger of God,” so, I am inclined to think, messenger means the same here ; that God is about to bring about reform, by introducing into the temple a pious, resolute, and energetic priest. “And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” The Lord *and* the messenger of the covenant, not *even*, as our translators have given it. Such I believe to be the meaning of this passage, so often quoted as prophetic of Christ.

There is a passage in the prophecy of Zechariah, in which Jehovah is thought to identify himself with Christ upon the cross, from the fact that he represents himself as having been *pierced*. I shall show the connection in which it stands, and then leave every one to judge of the probability of such an original reference. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication ; and they shall look on one whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.”

The first consideration which suggests itself in determining whether Jehovah identifies himself with Christ

upon the cross, is the fact, that Christ was *not* pierced, in the sense here obviously intended, till the spirit had left the body, and the body of Jesus was no more than any other body forsaken of life and sensation. The spirit, whether human or divine, had left it, and could no longer be concerned in anything that was done to it. To pierce, in the phraseology of ancient warfare, was to penetrate the body by spear or sword. The only way in which Christ was pierced in this sense, was with the spear after he was dead. His spiritual part had no concern in that. Nor could Jehovah have had, supposing him ever to have animated that body. Such an interpretation then, of this passage, is obviously strained and forced. The only way in which Jehovah could be pierced, is in a figurative sense, in the sense of being *grieved*, just as it is said of men, when their feelings are injured, that they are *wounded*. God was pleased in the Old Testament often to represent himself with human sensibilities. “Forty years long was I *grieved* with this generation, and said ; It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” The passage we are considering seems to be a parallel case. God represents himself in this chapter, as visiting the people of Jerusalem with a siege, in punishment of their sins, and for a while paralyzing their means of defence. But afterwards he turns to be their helper. “And it shall come to pass, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.” This is the verse immediately preceding the passage we are considering. In it we perceive the reason why he will turn and defend his people,

because they will repent. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and he shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born."

To me, it seems to be doing great violence to language, to mix up a siege of Jerusalem, in the time of the prophets, with the death of Christ, which took place four hundred years after. It has been thought to favor the application of this passage to Christ, that Jehovah speaks of himself in the first person, and then in the third: "They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced, and mourn for *him*." But the difficulty is no greater in the one case than in the other. There is no more reason for a change of persons, if he speaks of himself as the Messiah, than if he speaks of himself absolutely. The obvious meaning is, "They shall mourn for him whom they have pierced." This is not applicable to the Jews concerning Christ. His murderers did not relent.

Another passage is found in the fifth chapter of Micah. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." The pertinency of this passage turns upon the meaning of two words, the word translated "goings forth," and the word translated "everlasting." Now both of these are equivocal in their meaning. The word translated



“goings forth,” may mean “descent.” The verb from which it originates, *is* thus translated in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis : “and kings shall come out of thee,” that is, *descend* from thee. The passage may mean therefore, “whose descent is from an ancient family,” or a family long distinguished.

Then the word rendered “everlasting,” is very far from meaning eternity. It generally means a long time, but not a time without beginning. It is the same word which is used by Isaiah when speaking of the antiquity of Tyre. “Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of *ancient days*.” It is the same word which is found in the last verse of this very book of Micah. “Thou shalt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, *from the days of old*.” The meaning of the passage we are considering, then, is very likely to be this : “A Ruler shall come from Bethlehem, whose descent is from high antiquity, even from the earliest periods of the world.”

Strong corroboration of the Deity of Christ is thought to be derived from the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter of Zechariah. “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones.” This is said to be an address of the first Person of the Trinity to the second, as is shown by the significant phraseology, “the man that is my fellow.” This includes both the divine and the human natures of Christ, “man” standing

for the human, and “fellow” of Jehovah for the divine. But there are two features in this verse which are inconsistent with this supposition. The first is, that the Person who speaks is the Lord of hosts. Now the Lord of hosts, even according to the Trinitarian hypothesis, is not a Person of the Trinity, but the whole Deity, without distinction of persons. Now the whole Deity *cannot* have for a fellow the second Person of the Trinity. If applicable to Christ then at all, it can be applicable to him only in his human nature, and of course can prove nothing as to his Deity. The nature of the person called “shepherd,” is still further defined by the qualifying epithet “my,” attached to it, taken in connection with the Person who applies it, “the Lord of hosts.” The *man*, whom the Lord of hosts calls *his* shepherd, cannot be the equal of the Lord of hosts. The epithet “fellow,” then, must be restrained and defined by the connection in which it stands. That determines it to be applied to a person *not* Jehovah, but infinitely inferior to Jehovah.

In making up our minds who was really meant, we must be decided partly by the context, and partly by the use of the word “shepherd” in the Old Testament. Kings, even heathen kings, were called shepherds in ancient times, both in the Bible and in classical writers, because their care of their people resembled the shepherd’s care of his flock. God is represented, by Isaiah, as saying of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure.” The rulers of Israel, are called by Ezekiel, “the shepherds of Israel.” “And the word of the Lord came unto me,

saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, and say unto them : Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves." The epithet "shepherd," applied to the rulers of Israel, enables us to see the reason why another epithet, "fellow of Jehovah," is applied to the person mentioned in the prophecy. Jehovah, according to the Jewish constitution, was the Supreme King of the nation of Israel, and its human king was therefore spoken of as the assessor of his throne. "Jehovah said unto my lord, Sit on my right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool." Here, then, the king of Israel is represented as sitting on the throne at the side of Jehovah, and in this sense might be called his "fellow." The man then, that was God's shepherd, and the fellow of Jehovah, might be, and probably was, the reigning king of Israel.

Such are the passages in the Old Testament which are alleged to prove the Deity of Christ. How far they prove the proposition they are brought to support, all must judge for themselves.

## LECTURE V.

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### FIRST CHAPTER OF HEBREWS.

#### HEBREWS, I. 1, 2.

GOD, WHO AT SUNDRY TIMES AND IN DIVERSE MANNERS, SPAKE IN TIMES PAST UNTO THE FATHERS BY THE PROPHETS, HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON.

THERE is no passage of the Bible, which presents to the common reader so many, and so great difficulties, as the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is scarcely a question of magnitude in all theological inquiry, which is not brought in when any attempt is made to explain this portion of the sacred Scriptures. To enter into them all, would require, not a single lecture, but a whole volume. The only point with which we are immediately concerned, is the bearing it has upon the doctrine of the Trinity. In that relation we are now to consider it; referring to other topics only as they are incidental to this. The Trinitarian, coming to this passage with his hypothesis of the two natures, imagines that he finds confirmation of it in every line.

What is not applicable to him in his human nature,



is applicable to him in his divine nature ; and what is not explicable on the ground of either his human or divine nature, is explained of him in his complex nature, but in his mediatorial office. Armed with all these various hypotheses, which may be taken up and laid aside at will, he supposes that there is no part of this passage which may not be explained. “ God has spoken to us by his Son ” ; that is, in his mediatorial capacity. Christ “ is appointed heir of all things.” Who *could* be made heir of all things, but a Divine Person ? “ By him God made the worlds.” He, who made the worlds, must, of course, have existed before the worlds. This answers to his divine nature. “ Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.” What creature could be, and do all this ? “ When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This is applicable to his human nature ; that alone could suffer, that alone could be exalted.

“ Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” The Son of God, he who partakes of the divine nature, must, of course, be superior to the angels. “ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ? ” Whom among the angels has God ever called his Son ? “ And again, when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Who can be wor-

shipped, but God, without idolatry? “And of the angels, he saith: Who maketh winds his angels, and flames of fire his messengers; but unto the Son he saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” Christ is certainly God, because he is here called God; and, moreover, his throne is forever and ever. He must likewise be the *eternal* God, for his throne is forever. “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” This is applicable to him in his human nature, inasmuch as he is exalted above the kings of the earth, and made King of kings, and Lord of lords. Then, “In the beginning, thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, they all of them shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thy years shall not fail.” This proves him to be God, for the creation of the heavens and the earth is the highest act of omnipotence. Then, “Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This agrees with his human nature, which, as a human nature, was as weak as any other human nature. Such are the wonders performed by an hypothesis, and such is the explanation in which the Christian world, both learned and ignorant, have acquiesced for many centuries.

It will not be a difficult task, I think, to show the utter inconsistency and unsatisfactoriness of this explanation. The very first verse explodes it all. “*God,*

who in times past spake to the fathers *by* the prophets, bath in these last days spoken to us *by* his Son." God here, of course, means the entire Deity, without any distinction of persons, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, as it is the same who revealed himself to Moses and the rest of the prophets, and spake by them, and he has spoken to us by his Son. The "Son," here spoken of, is not a Person of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but the Son of *God*, the whole Deity, and, of course, is excluded from the Deity by the very terms of the proposition. He sustains the same relations, both to God and to man, as an organ of communication, as the ancient prophets. God spake *through* them, and spake *through* him, nor is there any difference intimated, except that he is called Son. They originated nothing, and he originated nothing. They spoke only what God commanded, and so did he. The Son then *cannot* be a person of the Trinity.

In the second place, the Trinitarian exposition of this passage overthrows itself by the inconsistency and contradiction of its parts. In one verse, the Son is said to have *made* the heavens and the earth; in another, to have been the instrument through whom *God* made the worlds; and in another part of the same verse, to be *appointed* heir of all things; and then in another, as having no power of his own, to defend himself, or punish his enemies, but to be invited by the Almighty to sit at his right hand while he makes his enemies his footstool. He is eternal, and created the world, and yet he is introduced into the world as God's

*first-begotten*, and the angels worship him, not because they owe him any allegiance, but because they are *commanded* to do so by *their* superior and *his*.

After making the Son, God, the Creator of the world, still there is a God over him; he is not the supreme God, but the supreme God has anointed him with the oil of gladness *above his fellows*. The Creator of heaven and earth has fellows, above whom he is exalted by being *anointed* !

I do not hesitate to say, that with the Trinitarian exposition, this passage of the Bible presents a heterogeneous mass of ideas blended in utter confusion. No consistent whole can be made out of them, which shall explain all the parts, and make them agree with themselves and the rest of the sacred Scriptures. Of course, we are driven out of it, and, as we believe that this Epistle has a consistent and rational meaning, we are forced to seek it in some other exposition.

But in order to explain this passage satisfactorily, it will be necessary to inquire what was the design and scope of the writer ? This, we find, was to guard the converts to Christianity from relapse into Judaism, by showing them that their expectations of the Messiah had received their fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth. To fulfil those expectations, he must be shown to be greater than Moses, greater than Aaron and the Levitical priesthood, and greater than the angels. The Jews of the later ages imagined, from certain expressions in the Old Testament, that the Law was given to Moses by the ministry of *angels*. The writer of this Epistle commences then, by endeavouring to show the supe-



riority of Jesus, the Messiah, to angels. He begins, therefore, with the most dignified titles and offices which belong to him. He commences by calling him "the Son of God," an appellation given the Messiah long before he appeared, but without implying anything else than a human nature. As the Messiah, he is made heir of all things, not, of course, of the physical universe, but is to rule and sway the world. The world is to be his spiritual kingdom : God, the supreme King, gives it to him, and thus exalts him, as it were, to a participation in his own dominion. This is now literally fulfilling in respect to Christ. "By whom also he made the worlds." The word rendered worlds, generally means periods of time, or dispensations of religion. The Jews divided the existence of the world into three periods : the age before the Messiah, the age of the Messiah, and the age after the Messiah. Of course, the time when he came determined them all. The age before prepared for him, his coming put an end to that age, and introduced a new order of things, and the age after was shaped and moulded by what he accomplished when he was upon the earth. So, through Christ, God constituted the ages.

I know that it has been maintained, that this passage asserts that Christ was the Creator of the material universe ; and, as a corroboration of this sentiment, its advocates appeal to the first chapter of Colossians, fifteenth and sixteenth verses. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature ; for by him were created all things which are in heaven, and upon the earth, the visible and the invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him." But it is only to the superficial observer, that this passage seems to ascribe the creation of the material universe to Christ. There are two circumstances which forbid such an interpretation. One is, that Christ has created all things *in* heaven, and *upon* earth. This, of course, is not saying that he created *the* heavens, and *the* earth, but rather that he did not create them. Then what *did* he create? The things he created are specifically enumerated; "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Now these are *not* the material universe. They are certain dignities, offices, and powers, which Christ created as the head of the new dispensation. What this all means, we have explained in the eighteenth verse. "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-begotten from the dead, that in all things he might have the preëminence." So far, then, from teaching that Christ is the Creator of the material universe, this passage merely asserts that Christ is the *image* of the invisible God; inasmuch as God is at the head of the material universe, having created it, so Christ is at the head of the church, having created it. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." The word rendered "brightness," means reflection, and the word rendered "express image," is the same which is used to designate an impression upon a coin. The Trinitarian, of course, applies this to the divine nature of Christ, what he was before his incarnation, the second Person of

the Trinity, the Son. But if he does so, it must be in inconsistency with what goes before, and what comes after. *His* image, &c., must, of course, refer to God, as in the commencement of the Epistle, and God there means the whole Deity, without distinction of persons.

Now the Son, considered as a Person of the Trinity, cannot be a reflection and image of the whole Deity, without introducing the utmost confusion, both into language and into ideas, for it makes him an image and reflection of himself. Equally inconsistent is this meaning with another member of the sentence, "having by himself made a purification of our sins," referring of course to the suffering of death. The second Person of the Trinity could *not* suffer death. But what is still more conclusive on this point, is what follows: "Set down on the right of the Majesty on high." The second Person of the Trinity could not sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. We are driven then to interpret "reflection" and "image of God," to mean *Jesus Christ as he appeared among men*, clothed with divine power and supernatural knowledge, and the highest moral perfections.

Man himself is said to have been made in the image of God. In another place, he is called "the image and glory of God." Paul says, in the eleventh chapter of first Corinthians: "For a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God." Much more then might Christ, when here on earth, have been said to be a reflection of God's glory, and a likeness of his being, when he superadded

to these natural reasons, his moral perfections and supernatural endowments. “ Upholding all things by the word of his power.” This bears, upon the face of it, the marks of being what it is, a wrong translation. *Upholding things by a word*, is not good sense, nor does the word thus translated bear that sense. It means, “ controlling all things by the word of his power,” or by his powerful word. In this sense it is applicable to the miracles of Christ, in which, by his word, he controlled diseases, stilled the storm, and raised the dead. *All things*, of course, has its usual limitation to the things which are the subjects of discourse. He controlled everything which he attempted to control. If you make it to mean the government of the Universe, you will make the writer say that the Governor of the Universe, having suffered death, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. And who is the Majesty on high ? The Supreme God certainly. It would read then, that the Governor of the Universe, having suffered death, sat down on the right hand of the Supreme God.

“ Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent *name* than they.” Can the the second Person of the Trinity be *made* better than the angels ? How can he be *made* at all, if he is self-existent ? How can he be exalted, if he is immutable ? And how can his exaltation above the angels consist in his having a better *name* given him than they ? Who *gave* him that name ? Let us read on : “ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, ‘ Thou art my Son, this day



have I begotten thee ?' " God certainly says this. This of course cannot be applicable to the Son, the second Person in the Trinity, for he can have no beginning of existence. Let us read on farther : " And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." These are the very words which were said to David concerning Solomon, as the others were spoken of his own exaltation to the throne of Israel. The government of Israel was a theocracy. God was its king. So when David was exalted to the throne, God represents himself as a human monarch adopting David as his son, and associating him in the empire. So God promises David, that he will protect and bless Solomon, when he shall be seated on the throne. " I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." This language the Jews applied to their Messiah, in a still higher sense. He was to reign, not over the Jews alone, but over all nations. No such honor has ever been done to any one of the angels, as to be thus called the Son of God. Jesus, the Messiah, then, is superior to the angels, inasmuch as a higher *title* has been given him.

" And again, when he bringeth the *first-begotten* into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him." The first-begotten, according to this representation, is indebted for the worship which the angels give him, to the command of a third person, who is God. He can be then no equal person of the Trinity, entitled to that worship on his own account. The word worship may be thought to indicate a divine nature. But if so, then the creditor, in the parable of

the cruel servant, may be proved to be divine, for the debtor fell down and worshipped him. It often means, to do homage, as to a superior. It does so in this case, for the person is not God, but introduced into the world *by* God. If the Son, the second Person in the Trinity, is the *first*-begotten, who are his brethren ?

We see then, in this, a mere extension of the theocratic idea. God, the supreme King, exalts Jesus to a place next himself, as a monarch exalts his eldest son, and commands the angels, his inferior ministers, to do him homage.

“ And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.” The idea is not brought out in this verse by the translation at all. What is rendered spirits, is winds, and what is rendered a flame of fire, means lightnings ; and the sense is, “ God makes the winds his angels, and lightnings his ministers.” That is to say, so far from angels being anything very exalted, winds and lightnings are so called. Nor are they permanent in their existence, for they cease to exist when the occasion on which they are employed is over. “ But unto the Son he saith : Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom ; thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore God, even thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” It is immaterial to the purpose of our present investigation, to inquire whether the word “ God ” in this case is used in the nominative or the vocative case, so as to read, “ God is thy throne, or thy throne, O God.” The sense will

be ultimately the same. Both will alike disprove the Trinity. It cannot be applied to the second Person of a Trinity. The second person of a Trinity *cannot* have a God. The second Person of the Trinity *cannot* be exalted on account of his moral merits, "because he had loved righteousness and hated iniquity." Neither can he be "anointed with the oil of gladness, above his fellows." Whoever it is who is called God, he still has a God over him, to whom he is indebted for his exaltation.

This use of the word God, then, is so far from helping the Trinitarian cause, being a clear case in which the term God is applied to Christ in an inferior sense, not involving divinity, that it takes from the force of those other passages where this word is thought to be applied to him, as for instance the address of Thomas. Thus far, then, the whole passage is conformed to the Messianic ideas of the Jews. God having spoken to the fathers by the prophets, has now spoken to their descendants by the Messiah, called, in the Scriptures, his Son. Corresponding to this idea of the Messiah being the Son of God, and in a manner his heir, he is promised universal dominion, referring to the second Psalm, in which it is said, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." As a son usually resembles his father, so the Messiah had some special points of resemblance to God, in his moral perfections, in his unerring wisdom, and manifestation of supernatural control over the elements. Another point of resemblance, in his relation to God, to that of the son of an earthly monarch to his father, is, that after

dying to cleanse mankind from sin, God *exalted him to his right hand*. He is therefore superior to the angels, by whom the Jews supposed their forefathers had received their law. He is exalted above the angels, inasmuch as he is called the Son of God. According to the Jewish interpretation, the second Psalm was applicable to the Messiah, as also the promise of God to David concerning Solomon. The very term angels, is less dignified than Son, for angel signifies messenger. There is, indeed, a passage in which the angels are commanded to do him homage. Then, as to the permanency of his duration, he excels the angels. Winds and lightnings are called the angels of God. They are transient in their existence. But God has said to Messiah, “Thy throne, O God, is forever.” O God, of course, must here mean, O King, or he could not have fellows, or be called God by Jehovah. The thrones of other kings crumble, but on account of the Messiah’s peculiar merits, his throne is to be forever.

The next verse requires a particular consideration. “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” The Trinitarian system makes this to be an address of the first Person of the Trinity to the second, and attributes the creation of the physical universe to him in an absolute sense. To this there are many objections. In the first place, it is inconsistent with



the Trinitarian exposition of the rest of the paragraph. According to that system, the second verse makes him the Creator of the world only in an *instrumental* sense, “*by* whom God made the world.” Now Christ could not have been the Creator of the world in an absolute and an instrumental sense both. Taken in connection with the rest of the passage, if it is an address of the same person to the same, with the words, “therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee,” it would prove that the Creator of the world is not the supreme God, and, of course, that the supreme God has nothing to do with us. Then the next verse: “But unto which of the angels at any time said he, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool.” He, who created the universe, could not want power to subdue his enemies. The Creator of the world cannot be made subordinate to any other Deity without confounding all theism, not to say the theology of the Bible. To apply it to Christ, entirely perverts its original meaning. It is a quotation from the latter part of the one hundred and second Psalm, which is a prayer to Jehovah of a person in trouble, and probably in sickness, apprehending himself to be drawing near his end: “I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” Here is no refer-

ence to the Messiah, as far as I can perceive, of the slightest kind. The only application then that it can have to the subject of the introduction to the Epistle of the Hebrews, is, that the Messiah's throne is to be eternal, because God is, who has exalted him to it; while the heavens, the very habitation of the angels, where the lightnings, which he makes his angels, play, and the earth, where the winds, which he makes his messengers, blow, shall pass away.

Such, then, I conceive to be the meaning of this celebrated passage. I have adopted it after frequent examination and revision, from time to time, for twenty years. On the whole, it seems the most consistent with itself, and the rest of the Scriptures. Whatever it may, or may not teach, one thing is certain, that it is altogether adverse to the common hypothesis of the Trinity, three equal Persons in one God. The Son, whoever he may be, is a *derived, dependent, subordinate* being. He is not the Supreme, but the Supreme is his God. And, whatever dignity or exaltation he has, all is derived from God, not as a Person of a Trinity, but from the whole Deity, without distinction of persons.

This view is corroborated by the rest of the Epistle. For instance: "We see Jesus, who was *made* a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he might taste of death for every man." The glory here ascribed to Christ, is not a glory of nature, or of original dignity, but of extensive relation, that of tasting death for every man, that of benefitting mankind by his death. This

certainly is not a glory, which can be predicated of a Person of the Trinity, who is incapable of dying. Is it objected, that he was in a state of humiliation, and that this is indicated by the terms, “*Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,*” by becoming incarnate? It may be answered, that the same word and the same phrase is used of man in general. “*What is man, that thou art mindful of him. Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.*” If *made* means become incarnate in one case, it must in the other, and all mankind will be proved to have existed in a state of preëxistent glory. “*Wherefore, in all points, it behooved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a compassionate and faithful high priest in the things which pertain to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*” Participation in supreme Deity is certainly a great point, an infinite point of difference.

Finally, the way in which the Epistle winds up is sufficient, if there were nothing else, to establish the relations which subsist between God and Christ. “*Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. To him, that is God, be glory forever and ever. Amen.*”

The attempt has been made, by bringing together two passages of this Epistle, to prove that Christ was the medium of communication with Moses and the

patriarchs in the Old Testament. It has been maintained, with great confidence, that he was the angel who appeared to Abraham, and to Moses in the bush, and led the Israelites out of Egypt. One of the passages by which this doctrine is supported from the Epistle to the Hebrews, is from the eleventh chapter. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." It is thought, that by "the reproach of Christ," is meant the reproach of being the leader of the Israelites under Christ. But there are two sufficient objections to this meaning. One of which is, that it does not appear that Moses, when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, had any idea of becoming the leader of Israel out of the land of bondage. The choice he then made, was to refuse to be reckoned or adopted into the royal family of Egypt, — a great worldly sacrifice, — and be considered as belonging to a nation of oppressed slaves. In so doing he subjected himself to disgrace and reproach, and shared it with the people of God. That disgrace was similar to that which was suffered by Christ and Christians. He was despised, and so were they. Jews and Gentiles looked upon him and them with contempt, and thought them a degraded class. It is probable, therefore, that the Apostle had in his mind this similarity of condition, and called the reproach of claiming kindred with the Jews, the reproach of Christ, because it was of a like nature.



The other objection to this meaning, is, that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has, by the use of similar language in another place, shown us how he would be taken in this case. “Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us, therefore, go forth unto him without the camp, bearing *his* reproach.” Not his *individual* reproach, but a reproach *like* his ; going out of the camp, because we are unclean, as he became, by being crucified as a criminal.

The other passage is in the twelfth chapter. “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more ; for they could not endure that which was commanded ; and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart, and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said ; I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh ; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from

him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven."

Here it is said that "the voice, which shook the earth," at the beginning of the law, was the voice of Christ, because *we* are warned against turning away "from him that speaketh from heaven, *whose* voice then shook the earth." Christians could only turn away from a voice which they heard, and that was the voice of Christ. So it is agreed that Christ gave the law.

But, if I mistake not, the meaning of this passage has been misapprehended on all sides. The voice was the same in both cases, in giving the Law and the Gospel, according to this representation. The explanation of the whole paragraph is this. The writer is contrasting the Law and the Gospel, particularly as to their mildness or severity. He makes the circumstances of the giving of the Law symbolical of its character. It was given on Mount Sinai, amidst the most awful displays of God's power. Moses himself was terrified. The mountain was enveloped in blackness and darkness and tempest. The Law was given with a voice like the sound of a trumpet, or accompanied with the sound of a trumpet. No one, not even a beast, was permitted to approach or to touch the mountain. As a counterpart to this, he describes the Gospel as given in a similar manner, not on earth, but in heaven. The Jews imagined things in heaven to correspond to those on earth, especially the heavenly Jerusalem, and the heavenly mount Sion, which was in

Jerusalem. On this heavenly mount Sion, and in this heavenly Jerusalem, he pictures the Gospel as having been given by God, in an audible, though milder voice.

The Jews imagined that there were present at the giving of the Law on Sinai, myriads of angels, as well as God, and Moses the mediator of the old covenant. At the giving of the Gospel, or the new covenant, not only is an innumerable company of angels present, but the great assembly of the saints, and of all holy men. God is there, as the Judge or Lawgiver, which were synonymous in the Oriental world, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. I will give, in the words of the inimitable original, the description of the august assembly, at which the writer represents all Christians as being present. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." This is represented as taking place in heaven, in order to symbolize the superiority of the Gospel to the Law. Of course, God, in giving the Gospel, according to this representation, spoke from heaven, from mount Sion, in the heavenly Jerusalem. But he spake on earth when he gave the law on Sinai. Hence the propriety of what follows. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh ; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more

shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth ; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

The parts of the Old Testament, which are quoted to prove that the divine appearances to Abraham and Moses, were Christ, when examined, will be found, I believe, to give very little countenance to that idea. One of them is found in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis. Abraham sees what he supposes to be three men, who afterward turn out to be three angels. By some it has been said, that these three angels were the three Persons of the Trinity, and yet we are told, in the same breath, by the same persons, that God the Father *never did* assume a personal form. Abraham addresses first one of them alone, we are not told which, " My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant." Then he addresses the three together : " Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree." It is said, that one of these angels, we are not told which, personated God, and spoke as God. But the Bible says no such thing. The words of the Bible are : " And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do ? " It is *inferred*, or *taken for granted*, that one of the angels said this. But there is as much against this inference as for it, for we read : " And *the men* turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom : *but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.*" By what species of logic it is proved, that these three men or three



angels were three Persons of the Trinity, or that one of them was Christ, I am utterly at a loss to imagine.

Another of these passages is found in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus. It is in the midst of the giving of the Law. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not ; for he will not pardon your transgressions ; for my name is in him. But if thou wilt indeed obey his voice, *and do all that I speak, then I will be* an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries." By this angel, God is thought to mean Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. But I believe, it is only a mind predisposed by education to see a Trinity everywhere, that can find it here. Nothing can be plainer than the whole phraseology, to show, that by the angel he means no real person, but that it is only a figurative mode of speech for his own presence and power and personality. The angel is nothing in himself, except as an instrument of Jehovah. "My name is in him ;" he acts by my authority, he does what I command. He is the mere organ of my speech. "But if thou shalt indeed obey *his voice*, and do all that *I speak*, then I will be an enemy to thine enemies." Jehovah is the ultimate agent in all that is done by the angel. This mode of speech was probably induced by the fact, that there was a visible token of the presence of God which accompanied the Israelites through the desert. God himself is sometimes called an angel, in the Old Testament, because he

manifested his presence by an angel, for the instruction and comfort and encouragement of the saints of old. Thus in blessing the two sons of Joseph, Jacob says : “ The God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel, which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.”

In the first Epistle of Peter, a passage is found which is thought to give countenance to the idea that Christ was the medium of communication with the prophets of the Old Testament. “ Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” But if we adhere strictly to the Trinitarian partition of the divine operations, inspiration is the peculiar and exclusive function of the third Person, the Holy Ghost. “ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The “ Spirit of Christ,” then, cannot mean Christ as the second Person of the Trinity. It must mean the spirit of prophecy, having certain relations to Christ, either the same that was possessed by him, or that which predicted him. The latter sense suits the connection best, the spirit which predicted Christ. The meaning then of the passage will be this. “ Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit which predicted Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” And this agrees best with the representation in the commencement of the Epistle we have been considering, that God

spake *directly* to the prophets, without *any* intervention, and in after ages has spoken through Christ in the same manner. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers *by the prophets*, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us *by his Son*.”

# LECTURE VI.

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## THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

### REVELATION, I. 1.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM.

THE Apocalypse is to most persons a sealed book, a book of wonders and marvels, a succession of pictures, gorgeous but unmeaning, a drama teaching nothing, a collection of symbols, the key of which is lost. Most people read it as they look through a kaleidoscope, only to see one image come over the field of vision after another, without any intelligible relation to the one that went before, or the one that comes after. On the whole, it is read with little pleasure and profit by the mass of Christians.

Such being the case, it is my purpose to step aside somewhat from the path of the controversialist, and give such a general view of the meaning and purposes of this composition, as to enable my hearers to read it hereafter with a better understanding, not only of its doctrinal, but its prophetical import.

It has been considered as a part of the Scriptures which strongly favors the doctrine of the Trinity. I



shall attempt to show you, in the course of this lecture, that its doctrinal bearings are all the other way. It has been interpreted to foretell almost every remarkable event and conspicuous personage that has appeared in the world, from the time that it was written to the present hour ; and every interpreter has been equally certain that he was right, from him who supposed the reigning Roman Emperor to have been the main subject of the book, to him who thought its chief purpose was to predict the career of Napoleon Bonaparte.

When viewed in its own elements, there seems to be no doubt, that the events which it predicts immediately began to receive their fulfilment. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, *for the time is at hand.*” It was written, too, for the consolation of those who were suffering persecution. It is supposed by many to have been written in the times of Domitian, one of the most bloody and cruel of all the tyrants that reigned over the Roman world. “I John, who also am your brother and *companion in tribulation*, and in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ.” The church was suffering great persecution, and many were put to death. The Gospel had been preached for more than sixty years, if this book was written in Domitian’s time, yet still the Christian community maintained but a doubtful existence. The power of Paganism was not yet broken, and the Jews were everywhere no less hostile to the Christians than the heathen world. Occasionally there was an outbreak of popular fury, which was sure to wreak itself

upon the Christians. In this state of things, there was great danger that their faith and patience would fail, and many of them begin to fear that they had been deluded ; that Jesus had never risen, and never ascended to heaven ; that he had no official relations to God and to man ; that he was not exalted to a state of favor with the Ruler of the Universe, and of course could not fulfil his promise of watching over and defending his church ; that his religion was not to prevail in its present struggle with its foes ; and that those future rewards which Christ had promised were never to be realized.

To meet and remedy this state of feeling, seems to be the purpose of the book of Revelation. To assure the church that they had *not* followed cunningly devised fables, when they believed in the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ; that he had in fact risen from the dead, and was exalted by God to a high condition of power and dignity ; knew what was going on upon earth ; was able to appear to his followers, and render them consolation and support ; was instructed by God with a knowledge of the future condition of the church and of the world, — he is permitted to visit the earth, and tell his church, that her troubles shall not always last, but that she shall be victorious over all her foes. Both Judaism and Paganism are to fall before her, and at last, her struggle being over, and her warfare accomplished, she shall be received into the abodes of bliss, into the new Jerusalem, which is to come down from God out of heaven, where shall be concentrated all that is delightful to the mind, and ravishing to the

senses, and God and the Messiah shall reign over her forever. Such, then, is the outline of the book. I shall now go over some of the scenes of this grand drama of the history of the church.

The first act opens upon the Isle of Patmos. There is John in the seclusion of banishment. It is on the Lord's day, the first day of the week, the day on which Christ had risen from the dead, and therefore regarded by the church with a peculiar sacredness. Suddenly he hears behind him a voice like the sound of a trumpet. He turns to see who it is that speaks, and behold, his Master, on whose bosom he had once leaned, and on whom he had thought so much, but so changed that he did not know him. That head, once bowed upon the cross, is now glorified; those feet, once pierced with nails, now glow like molten brass; that voice, once faltering in the agonies of death, is now like the sound of many waters; and that countenance, once pale and convulsed with suffering, is now as the sun shining in his strength. There is hope for the church yet, when its head is thus glorified. But the astonished Apostle fails to recognize the crucified amidst all this splendor, and he falls fainting at his feet. But Jesus hastens to relieve him of his fears, and lays his hand upon him, and repeats the very words with which he had calmed his disciples' fears on the lake of Galilee; "It is I; be not afraid: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore."

Such an appearance surely ought to dispel all doubt from the church, if her head is alive from the dead, and in such a condition of glory and power. But not only so,

he still cares for the churches, he knows their condition. He who could read men's thoughts on earth, and could tell Nathaniel where he had been before he saw him, now that he is exalted to heaven has still more extensive power. He who needed not that any should testify to him of man, for he knew the character of each man, in a state of exaltation knows the character and condition of whole churches. Not only does he know the character and condition of each church, but he is solicitous for its welfare, and sends messages adapted to the condition of each. Each message is closed with an exhortation to persevere, with the promise of some reward from his God : " To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of my God." Everything has reference to a state of trial and persecution, such as the church was then suffering.

After these various messages to the churches, the scene changes from earth to heaven. John sees a door opened in heaven, and is invited to ascend thither, to receive the disclosures of futurity, which are about to be made to him. None of course can know futurity but God ; and heaven is his residence ; therefore to know futurity he must ascend to heaven. That, he goes on to say, he is invited to do. He enters heaven through a door. To us this seems strange. But with the Jewish conceptions of heaven, this was perfectly consistent. They conceived of heaven as a vast temple, and imagined the temple which Moses was shown on Mount Sinai, and after the similitude of which their own tabernacle was to be con-



structed, was heaven itself. Into this vast temple John is introduced ; and there he sees the throne of God, the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. “ And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.” It glittered with glory like the brilliancy of precious stones, and was encircled with a rainbow. Out of it proceeded thunderings and lightnings and voices. To complete the scene, there are burning before the throne seven lamps of fire ; but to correspond with heaven, they must be of no common element, they must be composed of the divine essence itself, and they are the seven Spirits of God.

But on a nearer inspection, this visitant of the temple in the heavens discovers that the throne of the Eternal is borne up, not by the common supports of a seat, but by living creatures, instinct with life and intelligence. Four living creatures support the throne of God, with faces turned every way, each symbolical of some cardinal attribute of the Divine nature. The ox is the emblem of endurance, the lion of omnipotence, the human face of wisdom, and the eagle of swiftness, or omnipresence. To complete the dignity of the court of heaven, the Almighty must have his council, to intimate that nothing is done there without the fullest and maturest deliberation. Then we have the ceremonies of the court of heaven. The four living creatures, being nearest the throne, never cease their adorations. “ They cease not, day nor night, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come. And when those creatures give glory, and honor, and thanks, to him that sat on

the throne, and who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and who liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things ; for thy pleasure they are and were created."

But still no revelation is made. The secrets of futurity are yet locked up in the Divine mind. But soon he sees the way opened in which they are to be revealed. He sees in the right hand of him that sits upon the throne, a little book, containing the record of destiny, the future fate and fortunes of the church and of the world.

But here a difficulty occurs. No one is found worthy to take the book and read its awful mysteries, nor even so much as to look upon it. Hereupon there is a pause, and John weeps, but he is soon relieved by the assurance that *One* is found worthy of the great office, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, Jesus the Messiah. He looks and sees before the throne, and within the circle of the council, the crucified, in the form of a lamb, that had been slain. He approaches the throne, and takes the book, and then the whole host of heaven bursts forth in his praise, and tell the reason why he is worthy to receive a revelation from God. "Thou art worthy to receive the book, and to open the seven seals thereof, for thou wast *slain*, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy *blood*, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Such, then, is the combination of symbols by which

the writer would convey the idea, that God has made a revelation by Christ of the things which are to take place in regard to the fate of the churches and the world.

But so many things as are involved in the fate of a religion, struggling with the powers that be, cannot be told in few words, nor can they be told in words at all. It is necessary, therefore, that they be communicated by symbols, in which mode of expression, long familiar in the East before such a thing as an alphabet was known, many things might be condensed into a small space. The first enemy which Christianity encountered was Judaism, and the contest was sharp and bloody. Jerusalem was soon stained with the blood of the martyrs; Stephen and James were slain, even in the cradle of the new faith; and, wherever the preachers of the Gospel came, the Jews were their earliest and most bitter opposers. The first struggle, therefore, in the Apocalypse, is of Christianity with Judaism. This occupies the book to the end of the seventh chapter. To this the opening of the seals refers. The whole complexion of this part of the work, is that of hope and encouragement. The first omen is that of victory. "And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were, the voice of thunder, one of the four creatures, saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold, a *white horse*, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer," — an emblem of victory. This is enough. Christ and the Church shall be victorious. Judaism

shall fall before it. But before the destruction of this hostile nation, some are to be saved out of it. Many were in fact converted. Substituting a certain for an uncertain number, the converts are put down at a hundred and forty-four thousand. Not only is their condition on earth described, and their redemption in heaven, but among the myriads who surround the throne the martyrs are not forgotten. One of the seven seals is especially set apart to tell their fate. A profession of Christianity and martyrdom, were almost synonymous in the first ages of the church. The streets of Rome were sometimes illuminated by the burning of Christians enveloped in pitch and other combustibles. They were liable at any moment to be summoned before the magistrates, and examined under torture, whether they were Christians or not; and if they confessed a belief in Christ, were often immediately ordered to execution. This act, a crying injustice, the author of this book makes to be the subject of righteous complaint before God in heaven. The Christians of that age needed all the consolation and strength that could be derived from the knowledge of the fact, that their sufferings were not unregarded in heaven. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and the testimony which they had. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little



season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be accomplished.”

They afterward appear among the multitude of the blessed, with palms of victory in their hands, and clothed in white robes. “And one of the elders answered and said unto me, What are these, which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me: These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; For the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Such was to be the glorification of the martyrs, for whose consolation the book was especially written. The first enemy of the church, Judaism, being destroyed, there remained Paganism and the Roman power. From the seventh to the nineteenth chapter, the struggle between Christianity and Idolatry and the civil power, is variously represented, sometimes the latter taking the form of a beast and false prophet, and sometimes of a woman clothed in scarlet. At last, in the nineteenth chapter, Christ is represented to be victorious over all his foes, and he who went forth at the opening of the vision on a

white horse, conquering and to conquer, returns in triumph. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies that were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Then follows a description of the consummation of all things, when the wicked shall be punished, and the righteous made forever happy ; and the abode of happiness is described after the Jewish conceptions, as the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, filled with everything that can minister to eternal delight. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

Such, then, is the general prophetical and symbolical aspect of the book of Revelation, a most magnificent and astonishing production, which for gorgeousness and sublimity far transcends any other composition in existence. I now turn to its doctrinal bearings. It has

been considered as a stronghold of the doctrine of the Trinity, insomuch that not a few consider it to be conclusive upon that subject. It will be the purpose of the remainder of this lecture to show you that precisely the opposite is the fact. God is represented through the whole, as one, undivided, and supreme, alone possessing the essential attributes of Deity. Jesus Christ is represented as exalted to the first dignity in heaven, after the one Jehovah, but still as a being distinct, inferior, and dependent for all his attributes on Jehovah. Then, wherever you look, you see no such person as the Holy Spirit, which certainly ought not to be the case if it be a fact that such a person actually exists in heaven. The nearest approach to personality, is seven spirits before God's throne ; and if these are all persons, there are nine persons in the Deity, instead of three.

We begin then with the very first sentence, and we say that it overthrows every Trinitarian idea to be derived from the whole book. "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him." Consider for a moment what facts this language involves. Here is Christ exalted to heaven, and has been for at least thirty years, and possessing all the divine attributes that he ever will possess, God, if he ever was, or ever will be, and yet *excluded* from Deity both by the language and by the fact. To say that God gave Jesus Christ a revelation, denies him to be God, in so many words, and denies him to be God, in the fact of its being needful or possible to make a revelation to him. One test of deity is the possession of omniscience. If you say that Jesus Christ could be told any-

thing past, present, or to come, you deny that he is God. The test of his being God by identity of being with God, is identity of consciousness. To be the same in any intellectual sense, there must be the same consciousness in both. If there is not this identity of knowledge between Christ and God, then it is in vain that you assert an identity of being, or that you assert that Christ is God in any sense.

Then we pass on to the salutation. In that you see the widest distinction maintained between Jehovah and Christ ; and the Spirit, if personal at all, is seven persons. " Grace unto you and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come," that is, from Jehovah, who alone possesses these incommunicable attributes of self-existence and eternity, " and from the seven Spirits, which are before his throne," that is, God's throne. They can make no part of God, then, if they are before his throne, unless they are personifications of his attributes. " And from Jesus Christ." Let us consider the attributes by which he is distinguished, contrasted with those of Jehovah, " the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the chief of the kings of the earth." No Person of a Trinity can be the first-begotten of the dead, or the chief of the kings of the earth.

We now come to the doxology, which follows immediately after. Here the Trinitarian imagines that he makes a strong point. Here is a doxology to Christ. Is not this *demonstration* that he is God ? If he is not God, how can he have a doxology without idolatry ? Let us then take particular notice of the reasons for



which ascriptions of praise are given him, and the relations which he is represented as sustaining to God. "To him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto *his* God and Father." Such is the true reading of the text. Now a Person of the Trinity cannot wash us in his blood ; and although he possibly might have a Father, he cannot have a God. Whatever degree of homage is given to him, is not paid to him as God, nor for anything that God could do. The very terms, then, of this doxology, are not such as belong to supreme Divinity, but shut him out from participation in supreme Divinity.

It is proper to say, as we pass along, that the second Alpha and Omega, in the eleventh verse, have no authority, and are now rejected from the text by all parties. In the seventeenth verse, the phrase "the first and the last," though similar in appearance to Alpha and Omega, cannot, of course, be applied in the same sense, or to the same person, because immediately after he says, "I am he that *liveth and was dead*, and behold, I am alive forevermore." This, of course, cannot apply to Jehovah. The meaning is, "I am the *only* one, the first and the last, who died and rose again ;" as is confirmed by the rest of the sentence, "and have the keys of hell and death," have gone down through the gates of death, and come up again, and, therefore, can pass and repass at will.

The next indication of doctrinal sentiment, is in the messages to the churches. Christ there maintains the same relation to God and to man which he did when on

earth, as the organ of communication, the instrument of the prophetic spirit. What he says is not from himself personally, as would be the case were he God, or did he speak as God. But he says: "Whosoever hath ears to hear, let him hear what the *Spirit* saith to the Churches." What Spirit? The Spirit of inspiration surely, by which God gave the whole revelation to Christ, according to the first verse. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." How could there be a more conclusive disclaimer that he was God?

The advocate of the Trinity may suppose that he finds strong confirmation of his hypothesis, in the knowledge which Christ represents himself to possess of the state of the churches, and of individual character. "That the churches may know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts;" but he will find that it is only the extension of the same power which he had on earth, of knowing the thoughts and characters of men, which was a prophetic gift.

This whole matter is explained in the beginning of the fifth chapter. The source of Christ's knowledge is there symbolically expressed to be given him by God. The whole composition, indeed, is a book of symbols. Everything which is to be represented, immediately takes that form which befits the occasion and the thing to be done. At the pause in heaven, when no one is found worthy to take the little book out of the hand of God, and the Messiah comes forward to do it, he becomes a *lion*. He becomes a lion when he is called upon to act, but he is a lamb when it is his

part to suffer with patience. “And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and the seven seals thereof. And I saw in the midst, between the throne and the living creatures, and the elders, a Lamb, as it were slain.” He is slain, because it was by suffering death that he became the author of salvation to man; — “having seven horns.” Horns were the symbols of *power* in the East, and, strange as it may appear to us, the coins which were struck in honor of Alexander are found to have horns like a beast. So much was power associated with this appendage of the brute creation, that it is introduced into one of the descriptions of God himself, in the Old Testament, which has always been considered as one of the sublimest passages of that book. “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light, he *had horns coming out of his hand*, and there was the hiding of his *power*. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow. His ways are everlasting.”

The Lamb then, though he had been slain, is represented as invested with great power. He has *seven* horns, the perfect and sacred number, indicating *great* power. “And seven eyes, which are *the seven spirits of God*, sent out into all the earth.” Here, too, is

another symbolical expression. The eye is the symbol of intelligence. The Saviour, in the state of exaltation, has the power of seeing, or knowing, what is going on upon the earth. This has already been signified, by the fact that he was acquainted with the state of the different churches to which he had sent messages. But those eyes do not see all this by their own natural powers, but by *power supernaturally communicated*. They are "the seven spirits of God." Translated then from symbols to plain words, the sentence reads thus : "Endowed with great dignity, and enabled by the power of God to see whatever is taking place upon the earth."

But however advanced in power and knowledge he was, all was derived. "He that overcometh and keepeth my works until the end, I will give him authority over the nations, and he shall feed them with an iron sceptre, and as potters' vessels shall he break them in pieces, *as I also received of my Father*." However exalted, he is not God. So far from it, he has a God. "He that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of *my* God." "To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Such quotations as these ought to settle the question, so far as the book of Revelation is concerned.

But the Trinitarian supposes that he has counter-vailing testimony farther on in the book. Christ, it is said, is made an object of worship. But worship in the Bible is equivocal. It is paid not only to God, but



to inferior beings. The question for us to decide is this : Is he worshipped *as God*, as the Supreme Being ? Let us examine. John represents himself as being carried up to heaven, and as seeing a representation of God as a king, sitting upon a throne, but he is single and undivided. "A throne was set, and ONE sat on the throne." He is worshipped as one, single, undivided Being. The celestial inhabitants cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Here he is worshipped for incommunicable, divine attributes, for self-existence and eternity. Then, for what he alone could do, "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honor and power, *for thou hast created all things*, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Then Christ is introduced, not as God, for God is still upon the throne, but as a lamb before the throne. He approaches God, and takes the book out of the hand of God. Then the host of heaven break forth in his praise. "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, *for thou wast slain*, and hast redeemed us *unto God* by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." He certainly is not worshipped as God when he stands before the throne of God, and in the presence of God. He is praised for being worthy to take the book out of the hand of God, not because he possessed divine attributes, but because he had redeemed his followers *unto God by his blood*, which God certainly could not do. Then they are joined together in an act of worship, but not as equal, not as persons of a Trinity, but one as God, and the other as the Lamb. "Blessing,

and honor, and glory, and power, be *unto him that sitteth on the throne*, and unto the Lamb." There is no intimation that these two were one, or were equal. One was *on* the throne, which was Jehovah, and the other *before* the throne, which was the Lamb, or Christ. Then the martyrs, in their hymns of praise, keep up the same broad distinction : " Salvation unto our God, which sitteth on the throne, *and* unto the Lamb." There is evidently no intention on the part of the writer of exalting the Lamb to an equality with God, or of admitting him into the Deity, for it is said, " God *and* the Lamb." This distinction is kept up through the whole book. Christ is represented as exalted to the highest dignity in heaven next to God, and as watching over the welfare of his church, but everywhere as totally distinct from that unique and eternal Being, who alone possesses the attributes of Jehovah, " who was, and who is, and who is to come, who hath made all things, for whose pleasure they are and were created," who alone held in his hand the book of destiny, who alone knew all the events which were ever to take place, and who gave the revelation to Jesus Christ.

So far is he from being put on a level with God in the worship of heaven, that he is in one place put on a level with Moses, as a *worshipper of* God. An innumerable company is represented as having been victorious over idolatry, and having arrived at heaven, they there celebrate the praise of God in a hymn, which is called " the song of Moses and the Lamb," either because it was sung by the saved, both of Jews and Christians, or because it was the common object of

Moses and Christ to destroy idolatry. “ And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy : for all nations shall come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest.*” Now, if the Lamb were a Person of the Trinity, would he not rather be placed as a person worshipped, instead of a person worshipping ? Is not his being left out of Deity, and associated with Moses, sufficient evidence that the writer did not consider him as God in any sense ?

Not only so ; the theocratic ideas of the Old Testament are maintained through the whole book. Christ is represented as reigning, but it is only under God, as the supreme Sovereign, and by his power and appointment. “ And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of *his* Christ, and he shall reign forever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned.” In another place : “ And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven,

Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of *his* Christ."

All these things certainly look very different from a modern form of worship, which has been stereotyped, as it were, for the use of all ages. "O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God."

There are two passages near the close of the book, which, when brought together, are thought to constitute a strong argument for the supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. In the sixth verse of the last chapter, the angel who had just shown John the heavenly Jerusalem, and seems to have been the expositor of the symbolic images which had passed before the vision of the Revelator, says to him, "These sayings are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly ; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Then in the sixteenth verse, "*I, Jesus*, have sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches."

Now it is argued, from the fact that the angel says, that "the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel," and Jesus says, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel," that Jesus is the Lord God of the holy prophets, and as the Lord God of the holy prophets is Jehovah, Jesus must be Jehovah.

But in order to settle this, it will be necessary to determine whether, throughout the book, Jesus acts in an original and independent, or only in a subordinate and ministerial capacity. Does he give the revelation himself, or does he merely transmit it from God to men, or,



what amounts to the same thing, does not God, in promotion of his cause, send an angel to make certain disclosures to John? Christ speaks, in the Gospel of John, of *his* sending that which *God* sends in his name. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that *will I do*, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." He means to say, of course, that he will give it *through the Father*. The Father, to whom all prayer is to be made, would give it on his account, as he afterwards explains: "In that day, *ye shall ask me nothing*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, HE will give it you." It is not necessary that what is asked in the name of Christ, and given by God, should come through the agency of Christ, in order to be said to be given by him; but only to be given *for his sake*, and in promotion of his cause. This mode of representation enables us to understand what is meant by the first sentence of the book of Revelation, and all similar passages in the whole composition. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his (God's) servants the things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it to his servant John." Now it is immaterial whether the word "he," in this sentence, refers to God or Christ; it will ultimately amount to the same thing. If God sent the angel directly to John, then the angel was the angel both of God and Jesus, according to the representation we have quoted from the Gospel of John, by which Jesus is said to do that, which God does on his account, or in furtherance of his cause. Or if Christ sent the angel to John, he was

still the angel of God as well as of Christ, for he delivers a message, which Christ received from God, for the purpose of communicating it to mankind. Besides, the angels, though subjected to Christ, as we read, "principalities and powers being *made* subject to him," they are no less the angels of God than before.

It would seem, that the writer intended to represent that the angel came immediately from God, by a comparison of the first verse of the first chapter with the sixth verse of the last. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass ; and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John." In the last chapter ; "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass." If the last verse may be permitted to interpret the first, then the person referred to in the first, in the clause, "and he sent and signified it to his servant John," must refer to God, and not to Christ immediately, though an angel, sent by God to reveal anything to the church for the sake of Christ, and in furtherance of his cause, according to the representations I have quoted from the Gospel of John, might be said to be sent by Christ.

When these things are taken into consideration, the fact, that in one case it is said, "the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angel," and in another, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel," does not prove them to be identical and the same, or prove that Jesus claimed to be the Lord God of the holy prophets, for the book commences with making them distinct beings

from each other. One is God, both by name and by what he does ; and the other is not God, both by name and by what he does not do. “ The revelation of *Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him.”

Many persons are led into mistake, in the interpretation of the close of this book, by considering, “ Behold, I come quickly,” in the seventh and twelveth verses, to have been spoken by Jesus ; whereas they are spoken by the angel in the name of God. The angel personates God in the seventh verse, and from the tenth to the sixteenth. In the sixth verse the angels speaks : “ These saying are faithful and true ; and the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done,” and says, that is, God says through him, “ Behold, I come quickly ; blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.” Then the angel speaks again in the name of God, in the tenth verse : “ Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.” This is partly a quotation from the tenth verse of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. “ Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him ; behold, *his reward is with him*, and his work before him.” The angel goes on to speak in the name of God : “ I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

This is all agreeable to the Messianic idea, to which the whole structure of the book is conformed. Christ

is nowhere represented as coming *alone* to reign and establish his kingdom. He always comes *with* God to reign under him. As Judge, he says, "Come, ye blessed of *my Father*." He cannot *come* by his own power, nor does he himself know when that period shall be. For Paul says : " Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in *his own times*, HE shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." According to the conception of this book, God himself is to come and dwell among men. " And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The Messiah is to reign with him, or under him, and share his throne. In the heavenly Jerusalem is to be " the throne of God and the Lamb." The coming of God is to be simultaneous with the coming of Christ. So Paul represents in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. " Even so, them which sleep in Jesus, *will God bring with him*." This being the case, that, according to the Messianic ideas of the Jews, Christ and God were both to come to reign over the church, to raise the dead, and to judge the world, there is no objection to interpreting the declaration, " Behold, I come quickly," as having been spoken by the angel in the person of God, and all ground is removed for the assertion, that Jesus and God are represented as identical.

Such, then, are the doctrinal aspects of the Book of Revelation. So far is it from teaching the Trinity,



or anything approaching to it. So strictly and absolutely does it maintain the unity of God, the inferiority and dependence of Christ, and the impersonality of the Holy Spirit.

## LECTURE VII.

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### INCARNATION.

COLOSSIANS, II. 9.

FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY.

AMONG the doctrines involved in the Trinity, is that of the Incarnation, as it is called. That doctrine I propose now to consider ; first, what it is, and in the second place, how it is proved. The doctrine is, that God the Son, at the conception of Jesus, became connected in some mysterious way with his human soul, so that a person was formed, the elements of which were, a human soul, the second Person of the Trinity, and a human body. This is called the mystery of the incarnation. I propose to consider first the doctrine, and then those passages of Scripture which are thought to prove it.

It is not too much to say, that the whole doctrine of the Trinity depends upon it. And not only so, it depends on the utmost nicety of definition. If it is proved, that the whole Deity became incarnate in Christ, then the doctrine of the Trinity is gone, for then all distinction of persons is lost, and all those

relations of the persons to each other, which are necessary to the atonement, will be destroyed. Then, if incarnation is made to mean the simple indwelling of the Deity in Christ, then the Trinity is equally destroyed. In that case, it will merely amount to a *sensible* presence of God in the soul of Christ, a *conscious* communion of Christ with God, whereas his presence, though actually pervading all spirits, is usually *unconscious* and *insensible*.

When we speak of the incarnation of God, various relations of the Deity to time and space are suggested, of the most puzzling character. The unchangeable, (for all the attributes of Deity must be possessed, and equally, by each person of the Trinity,) changes his mode of existence. After having existed from all eternity in a purely spiritual state, he commences an existence in connection with a corporeal frame and a finite soul. He, who fills immensity, and who of course cannot change his place, becomes incarnate in a habitation of clay, the intimate associate, and more, of an infant, subject to an infant's wants and weaknesses. Sometimes the human soul is asleep, as when Christ and his disciples were in the ship. Then the thought is suggested, how this could be, when the Divine Mind never slumbereth nor sleepeth? What sort of a union could there be between a slumbering soul and a God who cannot sleep? The incarnation of God is a thought which does not bear examination. The more we think of it, the more improbable it becomes. It is not only antecedently improbable, but it does not agree with the actual history of Jesus of

Nazareth. Were there a *real* incarnation, then the complex person so composed must have possessed intrinsically all Divine attributes ; Jesus Christ, or the person who went by that name, must have been omnipotent and omniscient ; and if this combination was necessary to his official character, then whenever he spoke or acted in his official character, he ought to have possessed these attributes. Every instance, then, in which Christ spoke or acted in his official character, as *dependent* for power or knowledge, he contradicted or disclaimed the doctrine of incarnation. He who affirms that God gave the spirit to Christ not by measure, denies the doctrine of incarnation. He, who was composed of one mind, which was God, and another mind, which was man, could *not* receive the Spirit without measure, could not receive the Spirit at all ; for that which is infinite can receive no increase, that which is omniscient cannot be inspired, that which is omnipotent can receive no accession of power. On one occasion he says of himself, “ that he could *pray the Father*, and he would send him more than twelve legions of angels.” If the Supreme Ruler of the Universe were incarnate in him, what need of any prayer ? He might have commanded them himself, without any prayer. Go with him, then, in his agony in garden. If omnipotence made a part of his person, whence that agony, whence that prayer ? If omnipotence was *within* him, why should he have prayed to omnipotence *without* him. And then, when he was crucified, how could he utter that prayer, “ Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit.” Or how could



he utter that exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Did the Divine part forsake and abandon the human in this trying hour? Was the connection of Christ's human and divine nature of such a kind, that it *could* be dissolved? Then the incarnation ceased some time before Christ's death, and the divine and human natures parted company. And if they remained united, how could the human nature complain that it was forsaken of the divine?

But texts of the Scriptures are appealed to, which are alleged to prove, that what seems so improbable or impossible, was actually the fact. I propose in this lecture to consider some of them.

The strongest text upon this point, would, at first sight, seem to be that which I quoted at the commencement of this lecture. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This seems to be strong language, and if it will not prove an incarnation of God, it would seem to show an indwelling of God in Christ of a similar kind to that of which Christ speaks when he says, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." I had once selected this passage as a text for a discourse, setting forth the intimate connection of God with Christ. But in order to be sure of my ground, I investigated the passage with the best critical helps, and by a comparison of it with parallel passages. But as I advanced, I began to perceive, and the further I went on, the more I became convinced, that it had nothing to do with the subject; till at last, as an honest man, I was forced to give it up, and take some other text to show the connection

between God and Christ. "The fulness of the God-head," I found, meant neither the essence of God, nor his attributes, but the whole body of believers, the Christian church, gathered from all nations and languages and tongues, gathered together in Christ. The inquirer is driven into this result by the comparison of parallel passages, in this same Epistle, and in that to the Ephesians. These two Epistles were written at the same time, and sent by the same messenger. And every person finds himself prone, under those circumstances, to run into the same thoughts and a similar mode of expression. One leading thought of Paul at this time, and at all times, was the amalgamation of Jews and Gentiles, all mankind indeed, in the Christian church. The Jewish law, instead of bringing mankind together, had tended rather to separate them, to build up a middle wall of separation between them. Christ had come, according to God's eternal purpose, hitherto concealed, to give a religion for *all*, which he consummated and sanctioned by dying upon the cross for the benefit of all. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*." What he means, is further explained in what follows. "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the children of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, *and of the same body*, and par-

takers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." "But now *in Christ Jesus*, ye, who were sometime afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh," that is, by being crucified for all, and by his blood ratifying the new and universal covenant, "having abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make *in himself* of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God *in one body* by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." "For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." In another place; "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, *the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*" "The church," "his body," and "the fulness of him that filleth all in all," mean the same thing, — the great body of Christians on earth and in heaven. When the Apostle wrote to the Colossians at the same time, he varied the form of expression. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What is, in the other Epistle, "the fulness of him that filleth all things," is here, "the fulness of God." And both phrases are merely equivalent to this: "The church, the great multitude of Christians, are vitally united to Christ as their head, are connected with him in a

body." In one place, and by one figure, Paul calls the church "Christ's body," and he is its head. In another, it is "a temple," built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Christ is the chief corner-stone. In another case, it is "the whole family in heaven and earth." In the case which we are considering, it is "the whole multitude of the worshippers of God, assembled in Christ as a temple." "The fulness of God," then, has nothing to do with God's dwelling in Christ, or manifesting his attributes through him. The church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all things, and the whole family in heaven and earth, is the same with "all the fulness of God." The simple meaning is, then, that the whole Christian church is in vital union with Christ, and depends upon him, are taught by him, and therefore they want no other teacher. And whatever meaning you may choose to put on it, will prove nothing as to the doctrine of incarnation, for Paul wishes of ordinary Christians, that "they may be filled with all the fulness of God." If such language proves that God became incarnate in Christ, it will likewise prove that God became incarnate in his whole church. If it does not prove that God became incarnate in his church, so neither will it prove that he became incarnate in Christ.

There is another passage, which has been thought to intimate, if not prove, the incarnation of the Deity, or the first Person of the Trinity in Christ. It is found in the second chapter of Philippians. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery



to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Since I have been able to read this passage in the original, one of the greatest marvels to me in theology has been, that this passage has been adduced to prove the incarnation of Deity. It occurs in a paragraph inculcating humility. “ Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God,” &c. This is carried back into eternity, before the incarnation, but without the least reason, and against all reason. There was no such person in existence as Christ Jesus, before the incarnation, even according to the Trinitarian hypothesis. Jesus was the name of a man, who was born in Judea. Christ Jesus is the name of the same person considered as the Messiah. The name Christ Jesus, therefore, can refer to him only after his birth. To be in the form of God, means to be God, it is said. But it was something which he could put off, for he thought his equality or likeness to God, to be a thing not eagerly to be retained, but made himself of no reputation, literally, emptied himself. This certainly could not be, if the likeness to God consisted

in *essential* and *inherent* attributes. He took the form of a servant, literally, a slave. If being in the form of God, necessarily meant being God, so taking the form of a slave, must mean that he became a slave, which was not a fact. "Being in the likeness of man, and formed in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient even unto death," so far as to die obedient to God, of course, "even the death of the cross." The cross was the lowest punishment, and the most vile and infamous ; only inflicted on slaves, and the meanest and most degraded of mankind. "*Therefore* God hath highly *exalted* him." What language is this ? The second Person of the Trinity die on the cross ! The second Person of the Trinity exalted by God in consequence of his obedience ! Here must be some mistake. "And *given* him a name that is above every name." Can God give God a name ? "that at the name," literally, "in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*" The homage done to Christ, cannot, of course, be supreme, because it is given by the command and authority of a *higher power*, and obedience to that command will redound to the honor of that higher power, namely, God the Father. If it were given to him as supreme, it would *derogate* from the glory of God.

The explanation, then, of this passage, which interprets it to mean an incarnation, is encompassed with many inextricable difficulties, any one of which is totally insurmountable. What then does it mean ?

Let the same humble disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who when he was here on earth, though clothed with the power, and endowed with the wisdom of God, did not assume an external dignity and state corresponding to his endowments, but assumed an appearance lowly and humble as a slave. He humbled himself still farther. He not only was subject to all the sufferings of humanity, but consented to die upon the cross, that most ignominious of deaths, in obedience to the will of God. But those sufferings have been the means of his exaltation. They made him the head of the new dispensation, and caused him to be regarded with reverence, not only by the whole Christian church, but by the inhabitants of the invisible world. "God raised him from the dead," as the same Apostle says in another place, "and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come."

There is another passage nearly parallel to this in the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye, by his poverty, might be made rich." This, like the other, has been carried back before the birth of Christ, and interpreted to mean that he was rich in a state of preëxistent glory; that he renounced those riches, and came into this poor state of existence, that he might enrich his followers.

But the same objection lies against this, as against the other interpretation. We have no authority for

carrying back the phrase, "our Lord Jesus Christ," before the birth of Jesus; and if so, such an interpretation falls immediately to the ground. As Jesus never was rich, in a literal sense, so he could not become poor, in a literal sense. It can refer therefore only to his *choice* of a life of poverty and privation, in preference to a life of affluence and splendor. He who could feed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, could not want anything. He who could call up the hidden treasures of the deep to pay his tribute to the temple, must have *voluntarily* chosen to pass through life with not where to lay his head. The word rendered "became poor," has not any change of condition as its primitive and general meaning, but rather *to live* in a condition of poverty. The meaning therefore is, that Jesus Christ *chose* to live among men in a condition of poverty and destitution, when he had the means of assuming a more affluent condition. That riches, in this case, does not mean absolute wealth, is likewise gathered from what comes after: "That ye by his poverty *might be made rich*;" not rich in this world's goods, but in spiritual possessions.

There is another text, which would have a bearing on the subject of this lecture, were the reading in our common Bibles the true one. It is in First of Timothy, third chapter, sixteenth verse. "God was manifested in the flesh, justified of the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory." But as it happens, nothing is more uncertain than the reading of this verse. There are three different ways in which this appears in



ancient manuscripts of the Bible. The best authenticated, and that for which there is the greatest amount of evidence, is, "*He, who* was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit." The next reading, in amount of authority is, "Great is the mystery of godliness, *which* was manifested in the flesh." The whole Roman Catholic Church, all over the world, knows no other reading than this, as you may see any day you choose to examine a Catholic Bible. The least authority is in favor of our common reading, "*God* was manifested in the flesh." Griesbach, the best authority upon this subject, in his critical edition of the New Testament, has, "*He who* was manifested in the flesh." This reading agrees best with the general drift of the passage. It does not make good sense to say that God was justified in the spirit, or that he was seen of angels, any more when in a state of incarnation, than when in a purely spiritual state; nor does it agree with the attributes of God, to say that he, who cannot change place, was *received up in glory*. All these things were true of Christ, considered as the sent of God, which is the meaning, if we receive as the true reading, "He who."

Many Christians imagine that the incarnation may be proved from one of the first sentences of Christ's prayer with his disciples. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." But this prayer, instead of favoring the doctrine of the Trinity, is directly against it. According to the Trinitarian hypothesis, the only part of Christ which could have

existed before the world, was his divine nature, and his divine nature was God, or a Person of the Trinity, possessing all divine attributes. An equal person of the Trinity could *not* have received glory from God before the world was, could not have received glory at all. But what makes it still worse for Trinitarianism, he prays, as the Son, “Glorify *thy* Son;” he identifies himself with the Son, and as the Son he prays; “And this is life eternal, that they might know *thee*, the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” The Father, then, to whom he prays, is not a Person of a Trinity, but the whole Deity, the *only true God*; and the Son prays for a glory which he had *with* the only true God before the world was. Here, then, is the Son shut out of Deity by his own words. No Trinitarian, of course, will admit that the Son received glory from *the only true God* before the world was. We are driven out of the Trinitarian exposition, and but one explanation remains, that *no* incarnation is meant or implied in the case. The glory, for which Christ prays, is that which was *destined* for him as the Messiah, before the world was; that is, the glory of redeeming and saving the world. And this makes it consistent with what comes after, his saying that he imparts this glory to his disciples. “And the glory which *thou hast given* me, *I have given* them,” that is, of saving mankind. By the same figure, we are said to have been “chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world.” If we insist on interpreting figures literally, not only Christ existed before the foundation of the world, but we his followers. If such language

does not prove that we existed then, so neither does it prove that Christ existed then. So when Christ says, "Before Abraham was, I am," he does not assert that he existed before Abraham in any other way than in the counsels of God. It was only by a strong figure, that Abraham could have been said *to have seen Christ's day*, which did not really exist for almost two thousand years after, and it was scarcely a stronger figure for him to say that he *was the Messiah* before Abraham. I am aware, that this sentence of Christ's conversation with the Jews, is thought, even by scholars, to assert that Jesus existed before he came into the world. I believe that it has no such meaning, and from the following considerations. The main subject of this conversation of Christ with the Jews, was his claims to the Messiahship. Those he strenuously asserts. "It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father, that sent me, beareth witness of me." They cavil at this argument, and he subjoins, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye *know* that I am *he*." His words are literally "that I am." The word "*he*" is added by the translators, as is indicated by its being printed in italics in our Bibles. The form of expression is precisely the same that it is in the sentence, "Before Abraham was, I am." Now if our translators had supplied the word *he*, in this case likewise, as they ought to have done, the true meaning would have been given, and a false inference have been prevented, by which so many millions have been misled. The second consideration, that puts the

meaning of this passage beyond a doubt, is, that it can be shown, that at that period, the phrase "I am," uttered by one claiming to be the Messiah, was an ellipsis, there being understood after it the words, "the Christ." This can be conclusively proved in the following way. Matthew tells us that Jesus said, on a certain occasion, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and shall deceive many." Mark reports him to have said: "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am, and shall deceive many." So it is reported by Luke. That the words "the Christ" are left out in both these cases in the original, you may ascertain by referring to your Bibles, where you will find, in both Mark and Luke, the word "*Christ*" printed in italics. It appears by this that when Jesus did not use the words, "the Christ," in connection with "I am," they were understood by his hearers, and would be understood and supplied by the readers of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. Much more would they be supplied in the minds of those Jews whom he was then addressing, as he had used the same words in the same sense twice in the same conversation. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am." In the twenty-fourth verse of the same eighth chapter of John, he had said, "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins." We cannot suppose, for a moment, that this is a mere affirmation of existence. They could not doubt of his existence, and belief in his simple existence could do them no good. It is the affirmation of a certain character, or office, that he meant,



not mere existence. He meant to say, therefore, "If ye believe not that I am *the Christ*, ye shall die in your sins." Nor would the affirmation of mere existence suit the general object of the conversation, where it occurs in the sentence, "Before Abraham was, I am." The object of the whole conversation is to prove his claim to the Messiahship. To affirm that he existed before Abraham, would have been nothing to the purpose. He might have existed ages before Abraham, and still have had no mission to mankind. But to say, "Before Abraham was, I am *the Christ*," has a meaning in coincidence with the purpose of the whole conversation. "Not only am I the Christ, but I was so in the eternal purpose of God before Abraham."

There is an associated idea of his *superiority* to Abraham, which does not at once strike the reader of this conversation. The introduction of Abraham into this discussion, was altogether accidental, and it came from the Jews, and not from Jesus. He had said to them, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." The Jews thought this the assertion of extravagant claims, and asked him if he pretended to be greater than Abraham, the founder of their nation, and, in their estimation, the greatest man of all time, except the promised Messiah. He is dead, said they, and the prophets; whom would you make yourself? "Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God." I assume only that rank which God has given me in the arrangement of the world, that God, whom

you claim as your national God. He has made me greater than Abraham. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." He looked forward prophetically to my times, and rejoiced in the prospect, as of something greatly superior to his own. The Jews began again to cavil, and to take him in a sense which he did not intend. "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus annihilates their cavil with a single word, and at the same time asserts with a stronger emphasis his claims. "What I say, has nothing to do with my personal existence, or with seeing Abraham. I mean to say, that I am the Messiah, the purposes of whose existence are so vast and important, that they overleap Abraham and his times, and go back in the Divine plan to the very foundation of the world."

There is another class of passages which are thought to have a strong bearing on the doctrine of incarnation, in which Christ is said "to have descended from heaven," "to be in heaven," &c. The most explicit, perhaps, is found in the sixth chapter of John: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." This is thought most conclusive. For if the Son of man ascended up where he was before, he must have existed in heaven before he descended upon earth and became incarnate. But a little examination, I believe, will convince the candid inquirer that he meant no such thing. Trace the conversation from the commencement, and you will find that he identifies his *person* with his *doctrine*, which was from

heaven, and he speaks of *himself* as *taken away* from the worldly expectations of the Jews, and leaving nothing but his *doctrine* behind, which he affirms will still be equally powerful, in his personal absence, as his personal presence.

The conversation was introduced by the miracle of the feeding of five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. This bore so strong a resemblance to the miracle of Moses, of feeding the Israelites in the wilderness with manna, that those who saw and ate were reminded of the prophecy of Moses, and induced to think that Jesus answered the description of that prophet which Moses promised, when he said, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, *like unto me.*" This prophecy they thought fulfilled in Jesus, who had just fed them miraculously in a desert place. "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth, that Prophet that should come into the world." This miracle confirmed their earthly notions of the Messiah, and many of them followed him, with no purpose of being benefitted by his teaching, but of obtaining a support without labor, and perhaps of sharing the worldly advantages of his kingdom. He reproves their gross ideas, and admonishes them: "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you." They attempt to stimulate him to work another similar miracle, by the example of Moses. "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus seizes on the phrase, "bread from

heaven," as a fitting means of turning their attention to his doctrines, as the only reason for which they ought to follow him. "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven." That was not *heavenly* bread, which Moses gave you. "But my Father is *now* giving you the *true* bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world ;" spiritual life, of course. The world was not to eat him, literally, but only receive his doctrine. This he goes on to explain. "I am the bread of life. *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.*" Here we see in what sense he is the bread of life, — as a *teacher*. His *doctrine* is the bread of life, and he identifies *himself* with his doctrine ; and as his doctrine came from heaven, as the Jews asserted the manna did which their fathers eat in the desert, to keep up the parallel, he speaks of *himself* as having come down from heaven. The Jews murmured among themselves at his use of so strong a figure as calling himself the bread of life. "Is not this Jesus," said they, "the son of Joseph, whose father and whose mother we know ? How does he say, I came down from heaven ?" He answers, that their misunderstanding of his language arises from their perversity, and not from his obscurity. He, however, defines what he had said. "*He that believeth on me hath life everlasting.*" Still he does not drop the figure of bread, but resumes it, and adds another idea to it, that it is *living bread*, has the power of communicating *eternal* life. "I am the *living* bread, that came down



from heaven. If any man eat of *this* bread he shall live forever." This conception of himself as the bread of life, suggested to him another thought, that he could become the bread of life only by dying. In no other way could he confer spiritual life upon mankind. He therefore goes on to hint the doctrine, so revolting to a Jew, and especially those of so worldly a character as those whom he was then addressing, that he, as their Messiah, must *die*, instead of reigning over them as their temporal king. "And the bread that I shall give you, is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." Here the Jews, probably perceiving the drift of his remarks, begin to cavil again; "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus proceeds to teach the revolting doctrine in still stronger terms. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye *eat* the flesh of the Son of man," the Messiah, "and *drink* his blood, ye have no life in you." With your present ideas of the Messiah, you can have no spiritual life. You expect that he will supply your temporal wants, and minister to your worldly ambition. He must die, and disappoint that hope, before you will understand the real purposes of his mission, and receive from him that spiritual benefit which he comes to confer. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." He who receives me as a suffering Messiah, and embraces those doctrines which I lay down my life to communicate, shall be forever happy. "For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." So necessary is my death to give efficacy to my doc-

trines, that my body and blood may be said to be the nourishment of my followers. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." As food that is eaten, enters into the human body, is incorporated with it, and gives it life, so shall my doctrines, with which I am myself identified, and which I shall die to impart and confirm, enter the mind that receives them, and make a part of it, and give it life and strength." "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." My mission and doctrines are from God, the source of all life. He is the source of life to me. My doctrines have power, because they come from him. So, when communicated to others, they shall impart to them spiritual life. "This is the bread which came down from heaven." This is the true heavenly bread, of which I have been discoursing. "Not as your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." The bread which your fathers ate in the wilderness, sustained a mere animal life, which soon came to a close. My doctrines confer eternal blessedness.

The literal import of this conversation was sufficiently revolting. The thought of eating human flesh, and drinking human blood, was to a Jew most shocking, after the horror which their law inculcated of even touching a dead body, and its awful threatenings to those who eat the blood, even of an animal. But its *figurative* and *symbolic* meaning was no less so. In these dark sayings was shadowed forth another truth, that he was to

*die*, instead of “abiding forever,” and reigning over them in splendor and glory, as they expected their Messiah to do. They murmured about it, and complained of it. But he, perceiving their dissatisfaction, so far from retracting anything, goes on to add another truth, still more offensive, *that he was to be taken away from them altogether*. “Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before.” He had spoken of his advent, as “coming down from heaven, because he identified himself with his doctrine as the bread of life. He now merely carries out the figure by speaking of his departure, as ascending up as the Son of man, where he was before as the bread of life. *The place to which he went*, is a point of no importance in this conversation, but only the fact of his being removed from them, as we see by what follows. The point is, that, *personally*, he was to be entirely taken away from their worldly expectations. But that, he subjoins, is of no consequence. My bodily presence is nothing. My doctrines are all. And they would remain, and be equally powerful, to give spiritual life to the world, in my personal absence, as my personal presence. “The flesh profiteth nothing; spirit alone quickeneth. *The words that I speak to you*, they are spirit, and they are life.” My words, being spirit and life, are not confined, like my person, to one place or age, but will live, and reign, and sanctify the world, when I am no longer personally in it.

There are two passages in Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, which have done much to produce, or

at least to confirm, the doctrine of incarnation. The first is this. "For they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them; and that Rock was Christ." The second is a few verses further. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." From these passages it is argued, that as the Rock which supplied the Israelites in the wilderness was Christ, he must have been present with them, and if they tempted him, he must have been, not only present, but their leader. If so, he then existed, and afterwards became incarnate.

To explain the first of these texts, it will be necessary to consider the purpose of the writer in instituting this comparison between Christians under Christ, and the Israelites under Moses in the wilderness. His purpose is to dissuade the Christians from idolatry, and from partaking of idolatrous feasts. In order to do this, he reminds them of the fate of the Israelites in the desert, who were guilty of the same. To partake of the sacrifices, is an act of treason to Christ and to God; just as partaking of idolatrous sacrifices in the wilderness, was an act of treason to Moses and to God. Baptism, and partaking of the Lord's supper, are, under the Christian dispensation, a profession of allegiance to Christ and to God. It is inconsistent with this allegiance, thus professed, to go and partake of a sacrifice offered to an idol, as it is an acknowledgment of his divinity, and of allegiance to him. He therefore runs a parallel between baptism and the supper, and what happened to the Israelites, as to the obligations they created. "Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant,



how that our fathers were under the cloud, and under the sea, and were all baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." This great miracle of the passage of the Israelites through the sea, bore a strong resemblance to Christian baptism, as it in a manner consecrated the whole nation to Moses as their leader, and God their deliverer, secured their faith in the divine communion and authority of Moses, and bound them to obedience to him alone. "And did all eat of that spiritual food." The word "spiritual," here signifies supernatural, sacred, miraculously given, so that those who partook of it felt that it brought them into a peculiar relation to God, and under peculiar obligation to be his alone. That food, therefore, to them, was analogous to the bread of the communion to Christians; that is, a pledge of allegiance to God and to Christ. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." The water they drank was as miraculously given them as their bread. It flowed from a rock; and as that water answers to the wine of the communion, so that Rock, from which it flowed, answers to Christ, whose blood, which flowed from him in his crucifixion, is symbolically given to Christians in the communion.

Now after having been thus bound to God, by what answered to baptism and the Lord's supper, the Israelites broke their allegiance, and became idolaters. "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." In consequence of their sins,

idolatry among the rest, they perished in the wilderness. "But with many of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." If it was then so criminal in them to be guilty of idolatry, after the baptism of the Red Sea, and the communion of the manna from heaven, and of the water poured by divine power from the rock, it must be no less so for Christians to go and sit in an idol's temple, and partake of the sacrifices, after professing allegiance to Christ by the ordinances of his religion. In the phrase, "the Rock which followed them," there is an allusion to a Rabbinical tradition, that the rock, which Moses smote at Horeb, followed the Israelites the whole forty years' sojourn in the desert.

It may be objected to this interpretation, that the Apostle says positively, that the Rock *was* Christ, not something *corresponding* to Christ. It can be shown, it may be answered, to be agreeable to the Apostle's mode of speech on other subjects. Thus he says positively, that Hagar, Sarah's maid, *is* mount Sinai in Arabia. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond maid, and the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond maid, was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman, was by promise. Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; The one from the mount Sina, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. *For this Agar is Mount Sina in Arabia*, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children." It is no more necessary that Christ should be the rock which supplied the Israelites with water in the

desert, than that Hagar should literally have been mount Sinai, but only that he *corresponded* to it. The other passage is : "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents." This is thought to assert, that the Israelites tempted Christ in the desert. If he was tempted, he must have been there to be tempted, and of course existed at that time. This would certainly have been the meaning, if there had been the pronoun, him, after the second tempted, if it had read thus : "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted him." But as it now stands, we are at liberty to supply Moses or God, in the place of "him," according to the general drift of the passage. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted Moses, or tempted God, or tempted Moses and God, or God through Moses. We will cite the passage of the Old Testament which is alluded to, and we shall there find, that there is no mention of Christ directly or indirectly. "And they journeyed from Mount Hor, by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom ; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people *spake against God and against Moses*, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people ; and much people of Israel died." There is no evidence here, certainly, that Christ had anything to do with the temptation in the wilderness. But the language of the Old Testament throws a strong

light on the language of the New. It shows, to my mind, that Paul considered Christ to sustain the same relation to Christians, as Moses did to the Israelites, as their leader and head. "And the people spake against God *and* against Moses, Wherefore have *ye* brought us up out of Egypt?" It is no more a proof that Paul regarded Christ as God, that he warns Christians not to tempt him, than it is a proof that Moses is God, because he is associated with God in the language, "the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have *ye* brought us up." It *does* prove, however, what is evident in other parts of the New Testament, that the early Christians, during the age of miracles at least, considered Jesus as their invisible head, and as having the power to interfere miraculously in their affairs, not indeed as God, but as having power from God.

The superintendence which the Apostles considered Christ to exercise over his Church, during their age, and the source from which he derived his power to exercise that superintendence, may be learned from the speech of Peter on the day of Pentecost. "*This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye see and hear.*" Likewise from their devotions afterwards, when suffering persecution. "They lifted up their voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and the sea, and all that in them is." — "And now, Lord, behold their threat-



enings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, *by stretching forth thy hand to heal* ; and that signs and wonders may be done *in the name* of thy holy servant Jesus." Such was the origin of Christ's superintending power over the church in the days of the Apostles. It was not original, but derived and delegated.

Such are some of the principal texts by which the doctrine of the second Person of the Trinity is thought to be sustained, and I have now laid before you the reasons why they seem to me unsatisfactory.

I have now, in the seven lectures I have delivered, gone over the most important portions of the Scriptures, from which the doctrine of the Trinity is derived, and I have given you what I suppose to be the true interpretation of those passages. I set up no claim of infallibility. I speak as to wise men. Judge ye what I say. Such were the scattered hints from which a plurality in the Divine Nature was inferred, elaborated by the ingenuity of centuries into a dogma of faith, and finally forced upon the world by the arm of the civil power. So interwoven has it become with sacred associations, as almost to paralyze the mind which attempts to investigate its truths, and to sustain itself, not so much on the ground of argument, as proscription.

My object has been, to show that the Scriptures teach no such doctrine, but that God is one, one in essence and in person, possessing exclusive and incom-

municable attributes ; that Christ is one, is a derived and dependent being, and is our Saviour, because he has been *made* so by his Father and our Father, by his God and our God.

## LECTURE VIII.

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### GOD AND CHRIST.

#### I. TIMOTHY, II. 5.

FOR THERE IS ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, THE  
MAN CHRIST JESUS.

I HAVE hitherto been considering those texts of Scripture, which are thought to teach that God subsists in three persons. I have given those passages their true meaning, as I suppose, leaving every person to form his own judgment as to the satisfactoriness of my explanations. I shall now take the other side, and bring forward those passages which prove, not the unity of God alone, but shut out of his being every other person whom the Trinitarian may be disposed to include in it. I shall then consider how the force of these passages is evaded, or the explanations which are offered to show that these passages are consistent with the doctrine that there are three persons in the Deity. Every text in the Bible, in which the word God appears, without any intimation of plurality in his being, is an argument for his unity. The word God conveys no idea of plurality. It is connected

with singular pronouns, "I" and "me;" is represented as one consciousness, one agent, single and undivided. Every such text is an argument for the unity of God. Every such text requires of the Trinitarian an explanation, why, in that particular case, the language of Scripture is just as it would be if there were no such distinction of persons in God. It would have been exceedingly easy to have kept up this distinction throughout the Bible, by substituting the word Trinity for the word God. Then there could have been no mistake. If the thing existed, or the doctrine existed, no reason certainly can be given, why the name should first have come into existence some ages after Christ, and after the Bible was finished. It would have been equally easy for Moses to have written down, upon the stone at Horeb, "Jehovah your God, Jehovah is a Trinity," as "Jehovah is One." And it seems to me, if it had been an important doctrine he would have done so. He left a perpetual form of benediction to be used by the priests in blessing the people. "Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Now it would have been just as easy, if there were three persons in God, to have said: "The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless thee, and keep thee," &c. All these things must be explained by the Trinitarian, in order to make it probable that the doctrine was true, and yet passed over in such profound silence.

But in the New Testament we have better oppor-



tunities of testing this doctrine. God and Christ are often brought together into the same sentence. In those cases we have an opportunity of judging what relation the writers considered them to bear to each other; whether of equal persons in a Trinity, or whether Deity is represented as belonging to both. Take, for instance, the text with which I commenced this lecture; "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Now, for myself, I can scarcely conceive of any language, which the Apostle could have used, which would more explicitly have affirmed the Unity, and denied the Trinity. There is one God, not in opposition to the many gods of the heathen alone, but to the exclusion of the mediator. One argument for the Trinity has been, that a mediator must partake of the nature of both parties, between whom he mediates. But here that argument is cut up by the roots. Here it is asserted, that the *man* Christ Jesus is fully competent to that office. What is necessary to the office of a mediator? He must have something to communicate, and proper credentials to authenticate his mediation. Moses was the mediator of the first covenant. The law was the communication with which he was entrusted. The miracles in Egypt, in the Red sea, and in the desert, were his credentials. And they were effectual to bring about a peculiar relation between the Israelites and God, greatly to their advantage. So the Gospel, the New Covenant, is the communication with which Jesus Christ was entrusted. The mission of John the Baptist, his own miracles, death,

resurrection, and ascension, were the credentials by which his mission and his covenant were authenticated. And they were effectual to establish a peculiar relation between God and the Christian church. No especial nature is necessary to the performance of this mediatorship, except such an one as to enable him to deliver the message, make the communication, and exhibit the miraculous testimonials. To this mediatorship, our Apostle declares the *man* Christ Jesus to have been fully competent. He was to originate nothing. "My doctrine," said he, "is not *mine*, but *his* that sent me." "I have given them the words, which *thou hast given me*." "I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father *hath given me* to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that *the Father hath sent me*. And the Father himself, *which hath sent me*, hath borne witness of me." Such is the testimony of Christ concerning himself, and it coincides precisely with the Apostle Paul's. He puts his mediatorship, not upon the ground of his *nature*, but on the ground of his *commission*, on the ground, not of his being God, or having in himself any portion of the divine nature ; but of his having *received* his doctrines *from* God, and his having received power from God to work miracles, in proof of the divine origin of his doctrines. But it is said, that one part of his work demanded an *infinite* agent, the making atonement for the sins of the world. This required the second Person of a Trinity. Sin is an infinite evil, and therefore demands an infinite remedy. It is committed *against* an Infinite Being, and therefore must be atoned for *by*

an Infinite Being. But these are all human reasonings about what facts *ought to be*, according to human judgment. It is far safer to go to the Bible, and learn what facts *are*. It is not for man to say, what sort of atonement God will accept, even were it conceded that he requires a literal satisfaction. Whatever it is, can be effectual only by divine appointment. As it happens, we have only to complete the sentence, a part of which I have taken for my text, to learn the whole truth about this matter. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus, *who gave himself a ransom for all.*" Here, then, is the atoning part of Christ's mediatorship disposed of in few words, and declared to have been effected by the *man* Christ Jesus. I say nothing here as to what the atonement was, but only remark, that it was effected by the man Christ Jesus.

I now pass on to another passage, which touches still nearer the doctrine of the Trinity. It is in the First of Corinthians, eighth chapter, and sixth verse. "But to us, there is but *one* God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him." The Trinitarian creed says that God is three Persons, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This text of Scripture asserts, that God is *one*, and that the Father alone is that God. In saying that there is but one God, and that God is the Father, the Apostle *denies* Deity to all besides. There *can* be no such God, as God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ is Lord. Not only is he different from

the one God, but is shut out of the Deity by the very terms of the proposition. What is it to be Lord? It is simply to have authority. That authority may be original or derived.

Lordship is a communicable attribute. It does not determine the nature of the person to whom it belongs. We have the authority of Scripture for affirming that this Lordship was *conferred* on Christ. Peter affirms that "God hath *made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." "Wherefore," on account of his voluntary sufferings for the good of man, "God hath highly *exalted* him, and *given* him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Lordship, then, when applied to Christ, involves, not the presence of divine attributes, but the absence of them, because it was *conferred* on him by another. It was conferred by God, and it inheres, not in any divine nature in him, but in Jesus who was crucified. And what is it to be God? Something very different from being Lord. To be God, is to be self-existent, eternal, unchangeable, the cause and source of existence to everything that has a being; to be the sole sustainer of all things, "the former of our bodies, and Father of our spirits." These attributes and relations cannot be communicated, cannot be shared. No other being can stand in the relation of God to us. Names are nothing, if they do not correspond to facts. Only one being can stand in the relation of God to us. That being, the Apostle assures us, is the Father.



This diversity of relation is pointed out in this very passage. " 'To us there is but one God, the Father, *of* whom are all things." This phrase, "all things," at first sight, has the appearance of meaning the universe, but though such a sense is not absolutely excluded, the words which succeed, seem to restrain the sense to the things which concern Christianity, for the Apostle adds, "and we in him," or rather into him, or nearer still, unto him ; meaning, not the relation which we naturally sustain to him, but the relation into which we have been brought by Christianity, or Christ, as God's worshippers, acknowledging our allegiance to him. "And one Lord Jesus Christ, *through* whom are all things, and we through him ;" that is, as the mediator, through whom we have received all things relating to religion, by whose instrumentality we have received the blessings of the Gospel, and are the worshippers of the only living and true God.

There are other parts of the writings of Paul, which ascertain the relation between the Lord here mentioned, and the God here mentioned. Not only is the Person, here called God, the one only God, the God of the universe, but the God *of* the Lord that is mentioned in connection with him. In Ephesians, first chapter, it is said, "That the God *of* our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom." This then ought to settle the question, as to the Lord Jesus Christ's being a person of the Trinity ; for a person of a Trinity cannot have a God. If the Father is the only God, and is the God *of* the Lord Jesus Christ, then there are two reasons

why Christ cannot be God ; one, that the Father is the *only* God, and another, that he is the God of Christ.

The next passage I shall quote is parallel to the last, and occurs in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, fourth chapter, and fifth verse. "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." What I mean especially to point out in this quotation is, that Christ and God are spoken of in the same sentence as distinct from each other, and each as one, having an individuality of his own ; one as God, and the other as Lord ; and that these relations are not identical, nor the persons who sustain them, neither do they interfere with each other. What are the plain historical facts, to which this language corresponds ? Jesus represented himself as having been sent by God to set up a new religion in the world. He was endowed with the knowledge and power which were necessary to this purpose. He gathered around him a society, of whom he was, under God, the head. These disciples called him their Master and Lord. He formed a church, and presided over it while here on earth. He died for it, and God raised him from the dead ; and to confirm the church in their faith in him, and their allegiance to him, God *continued* to him those supernatural powers which he had possessed on earth ; so that during the apostolic age he held communication with his apostles, gave them sensible tokens of his presence, and of the power with which he had

been endowed. Miraculous powers were conferred on the disciples, according to his promise. He was seen in a vision by the martyr Stephen. He appeared to Paul, on the way to Damascus, with a striking manifestation of divine power. He often held communication with him in the course of his ministry. Various supernatural communications were made to the apostles during their lifetime, which assured them that he still cared for his church. They were made either by him in person, or by God, in furtherance of his religion ; so that it was the same thing to them, as if they came immediately from him. This agency of Christ in the world was so firmly fixed in their minds, that they joined him with God in their salutations. Though invisible, he was still the head of the church, and cared for its interests.

But you will observe, that though associated with God in the Epistles, he is nowhere spoken of *as* God, or as a Person of a Trinity, but as a person inferior and distinct. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints ; grace to you, and peace from God our Father, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ." Note the wide distinction between God and Christ. "From God *our* Father," not God *the* Father, which the Trinitarian might possibly interpret to mean the first Person of a Trinity, but God *our* Father, the *whole* Deity, the same Person to whom Christ taught us to pray, saying, "*Our* Father, who art in heaven ;" "from God our *Father*, and the *Lord* Jesus Christ." This is in the Epistle to the Romans. In the other Epistles, this salutation is repeated, with this variation

only, that in some it is, "Grace, mercy, and peace from God *the* Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord," showing that *our* Father and *the* Father are synonymous; and, therefore, that *the* Father is not a Person of a Trinity, but the whole Deity, without distinction of persons.

Turn then to the doxologies, and see the relation which subsists between God and Christ. Immediately after the salutation in the second Corinthians, he proceeds. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort." In the close of the Epistle to the Romans; "To God only wise, be glory *through* Jesus Christ, forever. Amen." In his first Epistle to Timothy, Paul writes thus, —and I wish you to note the marked distinction he makes between God and Christ: "I charge thee before God, *who quickeneth all things*, and Jesus Christ, *who witnessed a good confession, in the presence of Pontius Pilate*, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his own time, HE shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."

Consider how distinct God and Christ are here kept, and what different things are attributed to each. To Christ, "having witnessed a good confession in the presence of Pontius Pilate." To God, being "the



quickener of all things," or the source of all life. Consider what is denied to Christ, and conceded to God. "Until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, which HE shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate." The power of coming is not here ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, but he will come by a power derived from God ; literally, "God will show his appearing." Does this look as if our Lord Jesus Christ was a Person of a Trinity, when he cannot return to earth by his own power ? Consider then the titles which are applied to God, in contrast with what is denied to Christ. He is "the blessed and *only* Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; who *alone* hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man *hath* seen, or *can* see : to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." Christ is not even included in the doxology.

Turn now to the benediction and doxology, at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and see the distinction which is there put between God and Christ. Christ is spoken of as the great Shepherd of the sheep, and God as having brought him again from the dead. God is represented as working in Christians that which is well-pleasing in his sight, *through* Christ as an instrument. "Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, *through* Jesus Christ. To him," that is, to God, "be glory forever and ever. Amen." Here,

certainly, are not two equal persons ; but one is God, and the other an instrument in his hands, whom he raised from the dead.

Turn now to Ephesians. "Now unto him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ; unto him be glory in the church, *by* Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." I trust it would be superfluous to make any more quotations in order to show the relations of God and Christ to each other, and to show that Christ, by the very terms of the most striking doxologies, is not only not included in Deity, but shut out of it. Such passages show us how far the epithet "Lord," when applied to Christ, is intended to go, and how far it stops short of Deity. They show us what it is to be God, and what it is to be Lord, and therefore explain the passage which I quoted them to illustrate ; "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

I shall have space in this lecture to discuss only one of that class of texts, which seem to me to prove the absolute unity of God, and at the same time the exclusion of Christ from all participation in Deity. It is found in Christ's last prayer with his disciples. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." There are several very remarkable features about this prayer, bearing upon the point which we are now discussing. The Being to whom this prayer is directed, is the Being who, throughout the New Testament, is

called "the Father," and he here is called the *only* true God. The being who addresses him is Jesus, but not only Jesus, but Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Not only so, it is the Son that prays to the Father. "Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." And then again, "Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Jesus prays, then, as the Christ, and as the Son, to the Father, as *the only true God*. Could any words more explicitly deny that Jesus the Messiah, and the Son of God, had any participation in Deity? I wish to point your especial attention to the attributes of these two persons, and the relations they sustain to each other. Jesus prays to the Father, and says that it is eternal life to know him, — in what capacity? As the only true God. Can anything be more explicit than this? The Father is the only true God. Now if the *Father* is the only true God, then there must be a Trinity in him, if there is a Trinity at all. He cannot be one of three persons, each one of which is the only true God as much as himself. Then, if Jesus Christ be a Person of the Trinity, why should he be so carefully shut out of the Deity? "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, *and* Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent?" To square with the Trinitarian hypothesis, it should have been: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to be the only true God."

But what is the attribute of Jesus Christ, that makes

it eternal life to know him? The Evangelist goes on to tell us, “and Jesus Christ, *whom thou hast sent.*” It is then his having been sent by the only true God. The common theory is, that the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, sent the Son, the second Person of the Trinity. But this theory is here shown to be a mistake. It is the Father, *the only true God*, who sent Jesus Christ.

The celebrated Dr. Watts has some very forcible remarks on this subject, in his treatise, which he entitled, “Useful and Important Questions concerning Jesus, the Son of God.” This most pious divine, after writing his Psalms and Hymns, which have done more to sustain the doctrine of the Trinity than almost anything else, became, in consequence of years of learned and candid research, a Unitarian of the strictest sort. We have in his works a record of his investigations of the doctrine of the Trinity, and they are everywhere impartial, humble, and devout. Concerning the representation of one Person of the Deity sending another, he makes the following judicious observations. “The divine nature of Christ, how distinct soever it is supposed to be from God the Father, yet can never leave the Father’s bosom, can never divest itself of one joy or felicity that it ever possessed, nor lose even the least degree of it; nor could God the Father ever dismiss his Son from his bosom. Godhead must have eternal and complete beatitude, joy, and glory, and can never be dispossessed of it. Godhead can sustain no real sorrow, suffering, or pain. Therefore, in the common scheme, all this glorious and



pathetic description of the love of Christ, in leaving the joys and glories of heaven, when he came to dwell on earth, has no ideas belonging to it, and it can be true in no sense, since it can be attributed neither to the divine, nor the human nature of Christ, nor to his whole person."

When did the mission of Jesus begin? The first we read of it, is immediately after his baptism. He was led up *by the Spirit* into the wilderness, where he spent forty days in retirement. John, at his baptism, saw the Spirit descending upon him like a dove, and remaining on him. After the retirement in the wilderness, Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee, and immediately began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." In what did his mission consist? Let him declare in his own words. Immediately after his return to Galilee, he came to his own town, Nazareth, and in the synagogue read and applied to himself the following passage. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath *anointed* me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath *sent* me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, &c. To day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." This certainly is a different sort of sending from that of the first Person of the Trinity sending the second out of heaven. He was sent because *the Spirit of the Lord was upon him*, and because he was *anointed* to preach the Gospel to the poor. Parallel to this is the declaration of John: "He, whom God *hath sent*, speaketh the words of God, *for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto*

him." This is totally inapplicable to the second Person of a Trinity, when considered as sent by the first. The second Person of the Trinity could *not* have the spirit of the Lord upon him, nor have the spirit given him without measure. The mission of Christ does not run so far back as the Trinitarian system supposes, nor does it apply to any divine nature that is supposed to belong to him.

Strongly corroborative of this view of things, is the ground upon which Christ placed his authority. Had he been the second Person of the Trinity, the shortest way for him to have demonstrated his authority, would have been, to have shown that he *was* the second Person of the Trinity, and then his authority would have followed of course. God the Son must have just as much authority as God the Father. But he rests his authority upon the ground of *having been sent*. If he was God the Son, or God in any sense, the very fact that he was, would have been commission enough. He could have no higher authority. Yet he does not base his authority upon his being God, but upon the fact that *God had sent him*. "My doctrine," said he, "is not mine, but *his* that *sent* me." "He that will do his will, shall know of the doctrine, *whether it be of God*, or whether I speak *of myself*." If he spoke of himself, then he confesses his doctrine was not from God. What plainer declaration could he have made, that he himself was not God? If he had been God, then his doctrine must have been from God, *for the very reason* that he spoke it of himself. It is not his *nature* then, but his *commission*, that gives him authority, his

having *received* his doctrines *from God*. “He, whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God,” not because he is God, but because he is inspired, “for God giveth the spirit not by measure unto him.”

But it may be inquired, Do not the words, “sent” and “come,” when applied to Christ in connexion with the words “from God,” and “from heaven,” favor the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least that Jesus Christ existed in heaven with God before his birth? I answer, No; and I will give my reasons. To come from God, or from heaven, in the phraseology of the New Testament, means to be divinely authorized. Jesus says on one occasion: “If God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither *came I of myself*, but he sent me.” The sending, and coming forth, here spoken of, must mean taking upon himself the office of a divine teacher. That he might have done of himself unauthorized. But he could not not have come from God in the other sense, of himself, without being sent. In the same sense Nicodemus says to him: “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher *come from God*, for no man could do these miracles that thou doest, *except God were with him*.” Coming from God, is not coming literally from heaven, but having a divine commission. “There was a man *sent from God*, whose name was John.” If we interpret this literally, we shall assert that John preëxisted with God in heaven. It means that he was sent by God as a prophet. “The baptism of John, was it *from heaven*, or of men?” If we interpret this literally, we shall prove

that the baptism of John was practised in heaven before it was instituted on earth. So when Jesus speaks of himself as coming from God, or from heaven, we are not authorized by the language of the New Testament to consider it as meaning any more than his being sent on his mission as a teacher, being in communication with God, and receiving the spirit without measure.

There is another important point, which is all but settled by this prayer of Christ with his disciples,—the sense in which Jesus applied to himself the title, “Son of God.” The misinterpretation of this phrase may be said to have been the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity. The fact of Christ’s *praying* has often been brought as an objection to his being God. How could God pray to God, or how could God pray at all? It is answered by saying, that he prayed in his human nature. But the advocate of the Trinity gets rid of one difficulty only by plunging into another. If he prayed in his human nature, then he applied the title, “Son of God,” to his human nature. For he says to the *only true God*, “Glorify thy Son,” and immediately after, “Glorify thou me,” making “Son” and “me” synonymous. If that be the case, he is not the Son, the second Person of a Trinity; and “Son of God,” when applied to him, means no such thing. If we wish to know the ground upon which he appropriated this title to himself, there is no better authority than his own. On a certain occasion he was accused of blasphemy, for applying this appellation to himself in the very sense claimed for it by the Trinitarian system,



“because he, being a man, made himself God.” And how did he defend himself? On the ground that they were right in their interpretation, that he was God, and therefore had a right to the name of God, as integrity and fair dealing would have compelled him to do if he were God in fact? By no means. He makes no such claim, but he puts it on the ground of his divine commission, that God had *sanctified* him, and *sent* him into the world. What being sent by God into the world means, we have already seen. God, or the Father, certainly never sanctified the second Person of the Trinity and sent him into the world. “If he called them Gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be gainsaid, say ye of him, whom the Father hath *sanctified*, and *sent into the world*; Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?”

I have, in this lecture, brought to your notice four most explicit texts, which to my mind decisively prove the truth of the Unitarian faith. I have shown you from them what God and Christ are, and what relations they sustain to each other. I have shown you that the phrases, “mediator,” “Lord,” “sent of God,” and “Son of God,” have nothing to do with the *nature* of Christ, but are applied to him only in his official character. All ground of support, therefore, which they seem to give to the doctrine of the Trinity, is taken away. We see that there is but one God in any sense; that the term Father, when applied to God, is co-extensive with the word God, and all idea of three persons totally vanishes and disappears.

There are two more considerations, which may have more weight with some minds than anything I have yet brought forward, one of which I have already mentioned ; the comparison of the different forms of salutation, which occur in different Epistles. In some of them we have, " Grace, mercy, and peace from God *our* Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." In others, " Grace, mercy, and peace from God *the* Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

This, when fully considered, will be found to amount to an entire refutation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Consider what these two forms of expression involve. God *the* Father, and God *our* Father, are used as synonymous terms, perfectly equivalent to each other. They are both applied to a Being who is entirely distinct and separate from Christ, for the words are " God *the* Father, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ," and " God *our* Father, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ." God *our* Father, is not a Person of a Trinity. He is the whole Deity, without distinction of persons. He is the Person to whom we pray when we say, " Our Father, which art in heaven." From God *our* Father *and* any other person, must mean from God and from a person who is not God, not from the first and second Persons of a Trinity.

But the Apostle uses God *the* Father as precisely synonymous with God *our* Father. If God *our* Father, and God *the* Father, are precisely equivalent to each other, then God *the* Father is the whole Deity, and is *not* the first Person of a Trinity. And if Jesus Christ sustains the same relation to *the* Father, that

he does to *our* Father, he cannot be a Person of a Trinity, and he cannot be God at all. The parallelism of these passages, when analyzed, contains in itself an entire negative both of the plurality of the Divine nature and the Deity of Christ. Nay, Christ has told us himself, in the most explicit terms, that his Father is not a Person of a Trinity, but the whole Deity, in his message to his disciples, after his resurrection : “ Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, Behold, I ascend to *my* Father and *your* Father, to *my* God and *your* God.” This simple sentence contains in itself a refutation of the whole Trinitarian hypothesis.

The *other* consideration, to which I refer, was the representation of Christ as sitting on the right hand of God. This idea is purely Oriental, and is derived from the custom of placing a person peculiarly honored or exalted, in Eastern courts, at the right hand of the sovereign. A king, in an Eastern court, placed his son, or his chief minister, on his right hand, on occasions of state, to show that he was next him in power. So, according to the Theocratic and Messianic ideas of the Jews, the Messiah was to be next to Jehovah in power. Jehovah was the supreme King of Israel. The earthly kings, who reigned over that nation, were considered to reign with, or under him, to be exalted to his throne. So the Messiah was to be the successor of these kings, and greater than they all. He was to reign over all the earth, as they reigned over Judea.

Afterward, when the spiritual nature of Christ's

kingdom was revealed, the Apostles kept up the old language, and represented Christ as exalted to God's right hand at his resurrection, and exercising a spiritual dominion over his church. So much for the reason of this use of language. I shall now consider what is involved in this language itself, so far as the general subject of these lectures is concerned.

I first remark, that this exaltation, in the language of Scripture, does not make Christ a *participant* of Deity, but shuts him out of it. "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth *at the right of God*." He cannot *be* God, even in the highest state of exaltation, and *sit on the right hand* of God. This would be a contradiction in terms. Neither can one equal Person of a Trinity sit on the right hand of God, for he must be comprehended in that very God at whose right hand he sits.

Neither did sitting on the right hand of God belong to Christ originally, so that he descended from it, and was restored to it. Neither was he there previously to his resurrection. He was placed there by the power of God subsequently to the resurrection. For the Apostle says: "That *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being opened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, *when he raised him from*



*the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*" His exaltation to the right hand of God, is spoken of by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews as being subsequent to his crucifixion. "*When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" That rank did not belong to him originally, he was exalted to it, for another Apostle says, "By the resurrection of Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God ; angels, and authorities, and powers *being made subject unto him.*"

It is in his glorified human nature that he sits at the right hand of God. The martyr Stephen "saw heaven opened, and the glory of God, and *Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*" In another place it is said, that it is the same person who died, who is on the right hand of God. It was only the human nature of Christ that could die. "Who is he that condemneth ? *Is it Christ that died*, yea, rather that is risen again, who is ever *at the right hand of God*, who also maketh intercession for us."

This exaltation was bestowed on him in consequence of his sufferings, and his submitting to the bitter and disgraceful death of crucifixion ; for Paul says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, *who for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame, and *is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*"

And this exaltation, after all, has nothing to do with the general government of the universe, and has relation only to the church, for it is said in a passage, a

part of which is cited above, that “God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and *gave him to be head over all things to the church*, which is his body.”

So strictly true are the words with which I commenced this discourse ; “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus.”

## LECTURE IX.

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### THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST.

JOHN V. 23.

THAT ALL MEN SHOULD HONOR THE SON, EVEN AS THEY HONOR THE FATHER. HE THAT HONORETH NOT THE SON, HONORETH NOT THE FATHER WHICH SENT HIM.

THE whole Trinitarian system depends upon a supposition — which is, that Christ had two natures, one human and the other divine. I say it is a supposition, because there is not a text in the New Testament in which this doctrine is asserted. If it were positively ascertained that he had but one nature, the whole doctrine of the Trinity, and all the doctrines connected with it, would fall to the ground. It is my purpose in this lecture to examine this doctrine, — what it is, and what support it finds in the Scriptures.

The doctrine of the two natures is, that Christ was a complex being, the constituent elements of which were, a human body and a human soul, and the second Person of the Trinity, the Son, equal in all respects to the Father, and possessing all divine attributes. While sustaining this theory, the Trinitarian is furnished with an answer to every objection which can be brought against his hypothesis. For the conditions of this union

between the divine and human natures are such, that it leaves Christ the liberty of speaking and acting in either of these natures as he chooses. He may say things in his human nature, which are not true of his divine nature, so that the strongest disclaimer he can make of possessing divine attributes, or being God, is no proof that he was not God, but only a proof that he had a human nature, and sometimes spoke in that human nature, to the exclusion of the divine. It is evident, that, according to this supposition, the language of Christ in the New Testament is altogether anomalous. The pronouns "I" and "me," when used by Christ, mean something entirely different from the same words when used by other persons. Sometimes they include and represent a human being, and sometimes an Infinite person, the second Person of the Trinity. If we ask on what principle we are to discriminate between those passages in which he speaks as God, and those in which he means to be understood in his human nature, no criterion is given us, but he is made to speak in one or the other, just as the exigencies of the doctrine of the Trinity require. Christ himself never gave us any such principle of discrimination, nor did he ever give us a hint of his double nature. The two natures of Christ is not not a doctrine of Christ, or of the Scriptures, but it is an hypothesis, which has been invented to explain certain passages of the Scriptures, that were thought plainly to imply it. I make no reflections on those who started this hypothesis. They, I believe, were honest in it. They thought it the easiest way of accounting for certain language which they found in the



New Testament. The proofs of Christ's human nature they thought to be conclusive and overwhelming, but then there were certain things attributed to him, certain acts represented to be done by him, which they could not ascribe to humanity. Therefore they resorted to the supposition of another and higher nature making a part of him, which from its attributes they thought to be God, or at least a Person of a Trinity.

The most natural way, in which this discussion can be conducted, will be this : First, to examine the evidence of the *humanity* of Christ, and consider those passages, which assert, or imply, that he was a man ; and in the second, those passages which are thought to prove that he had another nature. The proofs of Christ's humanity are too many and too plain to be resisted. He had a human body and a human soul. He was born, increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. His conception has nothing to do with this question, for that affects only the body, how that *began* to exist. The soul must come from God, whether the body into which it is put begins to exist by God's immediate power, or by the ordinary agency he employs. He suffered pain, and weariness, and thirst, and finally died upon the cross. His soul was subject to human emotions. He felt grief at the grave of Lazarus, indignation at the hypocrisy of his countrymen, distress at the treason of Judas Iscariot, horror at the approach of death, and agony in the struggles of expiring nature, and commended his soul to God when it was about to leave his body. He ate and drank with his disciples, after his resurrection, and recognized with

them the same common relation to God at his ascension.

“Behold, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

He called *himself* a man. “Ye seek to kill me, a *man* that hath told you the truth.” He calls his disciples his brethren. “Go tell my brethren,” says he, after his resurrection, “Behold, I ascend to my Father.” “Whosoever will do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother.”

The Apostles call him a man, and reason from his humanity. Peter, in his first sermon to the Jews after the ascension of Christ, says, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did *by* him in the midst of you.” Paul says, “As by man came death, so by *man* came the resurrection of the dead.” In another place, “For if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace, which is by one *man*, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” He told the Athenians, that “God would judge the world in righteousness, by that *man*, whom he had ordained, whereof he had given assurance unto all men, in that he had raised him from the dead.”

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not only asserted that Christ was a man, but gives the reason why it was necessary that he should be a man. “We see Jesus, who *was made a little lower than the angels*, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste of death for

every man." It was necessary that he should be a man, that he might die. It may be objected that the phrase, was *made* a little lower than the angels, intimates that he was originally *above* them, but the same would be proved of man in general, for the very same word is applied to him. "Thou hast *made him* a little lower than the angels." Not only was it necessary for him to be a man, in order to die for the benefit of mankind, but that he might rise again, and become their leader into immortality. "For it became him," that is, God, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the *captain* of their salvation perfect *through sufferings*," perfect as a leader, or a perfect leader, by death. Had he not been a man, his resurrection would have been no proof of ours. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all *of one*," that is, one nature, "so that he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lives subject to bondage." It might here be supposed, that the phrase, "took part of the same," is intended to mean that he took flesh, by becoming *incarnate*, but the same would be proved of the children, with whom he is associated; for it is said of them that they partook

of flesh and blood. The next phrase is so translated as to produce on many a very erroneous impression. "For he took not on him the nature of angels." The words, "the nature of," are printed, as you may see, in Italics, in our Bibles, signifying that they are not in the original. The literal meaning of this passage is, "He did not *assist* angels, but the seed of Abraham." "Wherefore in *all things* it became him to be *made like his brethren*, that he might be a faithful and merciful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." His humanity did not cease with the present life. For the Apostle says of him, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be made like *his glorious body*." John says, "When he shall appear, *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is." Such are the abundant and overwhelming evidences of the humanity of Christ. Indeed, no persons are more strenuous in their maintenance of the perfect humanity of Christ, than the most zealous Trinitarians.

Now there is another class of texts, which the Trinitarian finds it impossible to reconcile with the humanity of Christ, and therefore concludes that there must have been another and higher nature connected with his human nature. He therefore makes that supposition, in the face of all the intrinsic difficulties that attend it. I say difficulties; but not a tenth part of those difficulties are realized by those who use the common phraseology of the divine nature of Christ. Nature, in this case, is a very convenient, because a very indefinite, term. We



are told that Christ did or spoke this in his divine nature, and that in his human nature. What is a nature? It is said that Christ's having a human and a divine nature, presents no greater difficulties than man's having a corporeal and a spiritual, a mortal and an immortal nature. But this, as it seems to me, is not so. The two parts of man, his material and spiritual, his mortal and immortal parts, are so totally dissimilar to each other, that they do not at all interfere. The mental and moral faculties all reside in the mind, the physical powers all are in the body. The mind, therefore, may use the instrumentality of the body, and the body submit to the guidance and control of the mind. But a divine nature adds to both a third entity, which in its nature is precisely similar to the mind, and therefore calculated to interfere with it, to take its place, to suspend its action, to absorb, or overwhelm it. There must be two consciousnesses, two processes of mental operations, two memories, two wills. And when one of these minds is God, and the other man, such an amalgamation seems to be utterly impossible. A person, to have a unity, must have a unity of consciousness. A human mind, by unity of consciousness with a divine mind, must instantly become omniscient. It must lose the very property which made it human, which is being finite and limited; if the human and divine wills coalesce, the human will becomes omnipotent. If this coalition is perpetual, then the person formed by it, must have all the properties of each, which are consistent with each other, and all that he says must be true of both. If this coalition took place to prepare a proper person for the office of the

Messiah, then all that he did and said in that office must be true of *both* those natures. The distinction, then, that he did and said this as man, and that as God, cannot be allowed. If Christ's superhuman knowledge arose from the junction of the human and divine natures, and not from inspiration, then, whenever this junction was dissolved, and according to the Trinitarian hypothesis it must often have been, we have no guaranty for the infallibility of what he said as man. And his sayings in the Gospels, are partly those of God, which are infallibly true, and partly those of a man, for which we have only human and uninspired authority.

But the usual course of argument is to prove that there are certain attributes, names and actions, given to Christ, which cannot belong to humanity under any circumstances, even when aided by divine power. In order to make this discussion as thorough and complete as possible, I shall consider some of these attributes, names, and actions.

I have already, in a former lecture, gone over those passages in which he is supposed to be called God. It is thought that a divine nature in Christ is intended by the phrases, "Son," and "Son of God," which are applied to him. Indeed, "Son" is the name his divine nature is said to bear in the Trinity, and, by a strange license, the "Son of God" is changed into "God the Son," overlooking the infinite distance there is between the meanings of these two phrases. I have already given you Christ's own explanation of this term. He says that he appropriated it to himself, not because of his *nature*, but because of his *mission*, because "God

had *sanctified* him and *sent* him into the world." Jesus prays as "the Son of God," and he prays of course in his human nature, though in his official character, for no other nature could pray. Paul says that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God, *by his resurrection from the dead.*" Christ's resurrection from the dead proved him to be a man, and not God. "The Son of God," in the other sense, could not rise from the dead. Paul says, "If we, being enemies, were reconciled to God by the *death* of his Son." Son must here, of course, mean his human nature, for "the Son of God," in the other sense, could not die. In the same sense, he says, in another place, "God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all," to death, of course. The "Son of God," in the other sense, could not be delivered up to death. "Whom he foreknew, them also he foreordained to be conformed to the image of *his Son*, that he might be the *first-born* among many brethren." The divine nature of Christ cannot be the first-born among many brethren. John says, "Whosoever shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that *Jesus* is the Son of God?" Jesus is the name of a man. The "Son of God" must mean, therefore, an office, and not a nature.

This view of things is corroborated by what Paul says in his Epistle to the Galatians. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman*;" that is, sent the Messiah, a man. The "sending," of course, is *after his birth*, for he does not

say, "sent forth the Son *to be* made of a woman," but made *of* a woman, *who had been born* of a woman. He asserts, therefore, that the Son of God was a man. The "sending" cannot go back farther than his birth, for another reason. It is GOD, the whole Deity, that sent forth his Son, not the Father, the first Person of a Trinity. God, the *whole* Deity, can have no Son who is the second Person *in* the Deity.

I trust it is necessary to make no further quotations in order to show that the terms "Son," and "Son of God," are applied to Christ's human nature, and therefore prove nothing as to any other.

It may be said that the phrases, "sent into the world," "come into the world," &c., imply a divine nature in Christ. His human soul could not have come, or have been sent into this world, because it had no existence before it came into this world. But the same reasoning would prove that we all preëxisted, for it is said of us, that "*we brought* nothing *into* this world, and can carry nothing out." Jesus himself has made "being born," and "coming into the world," synonymous, when applied to himself. "To this end *was I born*, and for this cause *came I into the world*, that I should bear witness to the truth." There is no reference here to a preëxistent state, only a statement of the purposes of his earthly existence. Christ addresses God and says, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." He must, it is said, have existed then. But it would follow that his human soul must have preëxisted, for only his human soul could pray or be loved. Christians are said to have been



“chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.” They must have preëxisted too. In another place, “According to his purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.” If it was *literally* given to us before the world began, we must have been there to receive it. If it was given to us in the purposes of God, it may likewise have been given us *through Christ Jesus*, in the purposes of God, and imply neither our preëxistence nor his. Great light is thrown on this subject by a passage in the First Epistle of Peter ; when speaking of Christ, he says : “Who was *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, but *appeared* in these last times for you.” To have been *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, is very different from having existed then.

There are two passages, in which Christ said of himself, that he came down from heaven. This, to a hasty reader, might seem to assert that Jesus existed before he came into this world. But a closer examination will show him, that in the first case, in his conversation with Nicodemus, the same sentence that would oblige us to admit that he came down from heaven, if literally interpreted, would teach that he first ascended into heaven, and after he had descended, he was still in heaven. “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.” To be in heaven then, in the sense here intended, has no reference to place, to ascending or descending, but only to have knowledge derived from God.

The second case is that in which he speaks of himself

as "the bread of life," identifying himself with his doctrines. It was after the miracles of the loaves and fishes. Some of his hearers wished him to repeat the miracle, from the low motive of obtaining food. He attempts to impress upon their minds the fact, that it is his doctrines that they ought to desire. They told him that Moses gave their fathers "bread from heaven." He answers, "My Father is now giving you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God, is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world;" by his doctrines, of course. "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me will I in no wise cast out." Keeping up the figure under which he had before spoken, he adds: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that hath sent me." That he does not mean a literal coming down from heaven, appears from what he adds immediately after. "I am the living bread, that came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Now if this proves anything to have come down from heaven, literally, it will prove that Christ's flesh came down from heaven, a thing which cannot be supposed for a moment.

With what latitude such language is used in the New Testament, may be seen in a discourse of John the Baptist. Speaking of Christ, he says, in comparison of himself: "He that cometh from above, is above all;

he that is of the earth, is earthy, and speaketh of the earth." If we make this to mean, that Jesus came literally from heaven, it must likewise mean that John came from the earth, that neither his soul nor his mission came from God. But such is not the meaning he wishes to convey, for it is said, "there was a man *sent from God*, whose name was John," but only to express Christ's superiority to himself as a divine teacher. So Christ says to the Jews, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above. *Ye are of this world, I am not of this world.*" The same meaning is conveyed in the two sentences. In the same discourse, he tells the Jews that "they are of their Father the devil."

I have now said enough, I hope, to show you the bearing which the phrases "come," and "sent into the world," "come down from heaven," &c., have upon the doctrine of two natures in Christ; that they prove nothing. I have already shown that nothing can be inferred from the terms Mediator, and Lord. I shall now proceed to what he has done, what he is, and what he is to do, as proving two natures in him.

It is said that it was necessary that Christ should have a divine nature, in order to effect the atonement. The law was broken, its honor was violated. It could not be restored to the respect of the universe, unless its penalties were undergone by an infinite substitute. Sin is an infinite evil, it is committed against an infinite Being, and therefore cannot be atoned for except by an infinite Person. The second Person of the Trinity undertook this office, descended to the earth, became incarnate, suffered the penalty of man's transgression, and

returned to heaven, having thus accomplished the deliverance of the human race. It is unaccountable how the world goes on, generation after generation, using words without ideas. God can neither ascend nor descend. *Person* is a mere abstraction, in any sense, which will not involve three Gods. No Trinitarian, in fact, holds to more than one divine essence. That divine essence cannot *make* satisfaction to itself, and *receive* it, at the same time. The very hypothesis, then, becomes impossible. Nor can God suffer the penalty of sin, for God cannot suffer at all. If any atonement for sin is necessary, that alone is necessary which God appoints and chooses to receive. Let us then go to the Scriptures, and see how they represent the matter. The New Testament declares, that it was necessary that Christ *should be a man*, that he might do this very thing. “Wherefore in all things it behooved him *to be made like his brethren*, that *he might be* a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God *he might taste of death* for every man.” He made the atonement then, whatever it was, in his *human nature*, for he could die in no other. No sacrifice can take away sin, unless man repents, and God chooses to forgive him. And the very purpose for which sacrifices were instituted, was, to symbolize this very thing, mercy on the part of God, and penitence on the part of man. Inasmuch as Christ was the ambassador of God’s mercy, and called men to repent-



ance, and died in attestation of his mission, his death was *analogous* to a sacrifice ; but neither his death nor sacrifices *procured* God's mercy, but only *symbolized* it, assured it to mankind. There is no occasion then, that the *symbol* should be infinite, in order to answer the purpose of a symbol. It is sufficient if it brings men to repentance and rescues them from sin.

Agreeably to this view of things, Christ is mentioned as making the atonement in such terms as to shut the divine Being entirely out of the transaction. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus, *who gave himself a ransom for all.*" "Grace to you, and peace from God the Father, *and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins*, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father." So in the final consummation of all things, Christ is praised in such a way as to exclude all Deity from the act of suffering to redeem men from sin. "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto *his God and Father*, to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever." So far then from the work of atonement proving a double nature in Christ, it all looks the other way, and is of such a nature, that a being, who is God, could have no part in it.

Next we are told, that Christ must have a nature above his human nature, or he could not raise the dead. He is represented as raising the dead, therefore he has a divine nature. Christ says of himself, "*And this is the Father's will*, which hath sent me, that of all which he

hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And *this is the will of the Father*, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.” I admit, that if Christ were represented as doing this by his *own undervived power*, it would be conclusive to prove what is claimed for it, that he had more than a human nature. But what is the fact? Did he raise Lazarus by his own power? No. He disclaimed it. He says, “Father, I thank thee that *thou hast heard me*.” “As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself.” It will not be by his own power that he will raise the dead, for the Apostle says, “Knowing that he which raised up Jesus shall raise up us also *by Jesus*.” Now if this be the case, that he is only the *instrument*, there is no possibility of determining his nature, from what he does, to be this or that; and whatever inferences can be drawn from the fact, that God will raise the dead *by* him, are against his divine nature rather than in favor of it. The omnipotence of God can clothe any agent that he pleases to select with sufficient power to do anything that he chooses. The Apostles went forth commissioned to raise the dead ; but any one who should infer from this, that they had any other nature than human, would be greatly deceived.

But it is urged over and over, as unanswerable, that

Christ must be God, or at least have a nature more than human, because he is to judge the world. It is said, that such an office must require omniscience, nothing short of a knowledge of all the transactions of the past. That, however, is a human speculation. It is of little consequence how we may speculate. The shortest way is to appeal to facts. Those we shall find to be plain, on an appeal to the Bible. "I charge thee before God, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearance and his kingdom." "Why dost thou judge thy brother, and why dost thou set at naught thy brother, for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, with all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them, the one from the other, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."

Now, whatever this judgment may be, Christ will act in it only in an instrumental capacity, for the same Scriptures say ; "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men *by* Jesus Christ." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son." "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damna-

tion. I can *of mine own self* do nothing ; as I *hear* I judge, and my judgment is just, *because* I seek not *mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." That his judgment is merely ministerial, appears from the very language of the description of the final judgment. "Come ye blessed of *my Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Not only is the judgment to be instrumental, but to be exercised by *a man*. Paul at Athens declares, "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, *by that man* whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that *he hath raised him from the dead*." Peter makes, in substance, the same declaration in his speech to Cornelius and his companions. The person, who when here on earth, owed his power of working miracles to his "being anointed with the Holy Ghost," and to "God's being with him," must owe his power of judging the world to the same assistance. "How God anointed *Jesus of Nazareth* with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil, *for God was with him* ; whom they slew and hanged on a tree ; him hath God raised up and showed him openly. And he hath commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he that was *ordained of God to be the judge* of the quick and the dead."

I trust that these quotations are sufficient to show, that in whatever sense Christ is to judge the world, his agency is to be ministerial only ; *through* him God is to judge the world, and is to judge the world *by the man* Christ Jesus.



Finally, in the state of exaltation to which Christ was advanced, we find no traces of his possessing two natures. Soon after his ascension, he was seen in vision by the martyr Stephen, but not as a Person of the Trinity, not as God in any sense, nor as having more than one nature. "He saw heaven opened, he saw the glory of God, and *Jesus* standing on the right hand of God." He was seen by Paul on his way to Damascus. In answer to Paul's question, asking who he was, he says, "I am *Jesus*, whom thou persecutest." The exaltation of Christ is generally connected with his crucifixion. Only one nature of Christ was capable of being crucified. "Who is he that condemneth? Is it *Christ that died*, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even *at the right hand of God*, who also maketh intercession for us." In another place, "which he wrought in Christ, when *he raised him from the dead*, and *set him at his own right hand* in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." In another place it is said, that it was in consequence of his suffering death, that he is crowned with glory and honor. In another place it is said to be in consequence of his submission to die on the cross, that "God has highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name." Such passages as these are sufficient to show us, that the *exaltation* of Christ is no objection to the simplicity of his nature ; nor ought it to be, since God is omnipotent, and can bestow any measure of power, knowledge, and dignity, on any being he pleases, short of communicating his own incommunicable attributes.

From the arguments we have gone over, you perceive there is no sufficient ground in the Scriptures for supposing that Christ had two natures united in his person. We see no traces of more than *one* intelligence, *one* mind and will. What his nature was, I leave every one to gather for himself. Whatever honor we pay him, we must remember that it is not an honor due his nature, but only his commission ; and all the honor we pay him must redound to God, for we read that all men must honor the Son as they honor the Father, because he is the Father's *representative*. "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father *which sent him*."

There is a class of texts, which it may be well to consider here, which have led some to imagine, that we are to honor the Son as we honor the Father, that we are to honor Christ as we honor God, because God has committed to him the government and control of the physical universe ; that it is he, and not God, who now sustains and guides all things. I have myself heard a preacher, whose opinions are implicitly received by a numerous sect in this country, declare that when Christ ascended, there was a revolution in heaven ; that God gave up the control of the whole creation, visible and invisible, to Christ ; and it seemed to be inferred, that he himself retired and became quiescent.

Such a government of the universe as this, would seem to be altogether incommensurate with human nature, in any state of exaltation. I propose to consider here those texts upon which such an opinion is founded. The strongest passage, which is thought to support this opinion, is found in the words of Christ when he com-

missioned his disciples to go and teach all nations. This was after his resurrection. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." These words have, it must be confessed, the appearance of asserting that the whole control of the physical universe is committed to Christ. But this appearance entirely vanishes when we examine the original. The word there used is *authority*, not power. "All *authority* is given unto me in heaven and in earth." More light is thrown upon this passage, when we consider that the phrase, "in heaven and in earth," was then, just as it is now, a phrase for *universality*; and means nothing more or less in this case than *full* authority for the purpose in hand, that of commissioning his disciples. It is equivalent, as I conceive, to what he said on another occasion, after his resurrection, as reported by John: "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you;" that is, with full authority.

Another text, which is thought to teach Christ's government of the physical universe, is found in the introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Who, being the brightness of his (God's) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." But as it happens, the word here rendered *upholding*, has no such meaning, but means *controlling*, and it is said of Christ *before his exaltation*, when he was here on earth, and of course refers, not to his government of the universe, but to his miraculous powers, not of *continuing* the course of nature, but of *interrupting* it; and that he never professed to do by his own power, but by a power given him by God for

the occasion, as he expressly declared at the grave of Lazarus : " I thank thee that thou *hast heard me.*" " All things," then, must be received, as it must in all similar cases, not as an *absolute* universal, but with those limitations which belong to the subject. Christians are said " to have an unction from the Holy One, and to know *all things* ;" not to be absolutely *omniscient*, but to know all things that as Christians they ought to know. So Christ had an *extensive* control of physical nature, as extensive as was necessary for the purpose of substantiating his mission.

There is another sentence in Matthew, which, taken without limitation, would seem to assert that God had delivered up the universe to Christ. " All things are delivered unto me of my Father." But the connection teaches us with what restrictions this term of universality is to be received in this case. In the first place, it must be restricted to *knowledge* ; in the second place, to *religious* knowledge, that knowledge which is communicated by revelation ; and, in the third place, to that knowledge which is contained in *Christianity*, which respects God and Christ, and Christ's relations to God and to mankind. It occurs immediately after Christ's prayer, in which he thanks God for having revealed to the simple and the ignorant things which had been concealed from the wise. " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid *these things* from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. *All things* are delivered unto me of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither



knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he to whom the Son will reveal him.*" *All things* then, here, does not refer to the material world at all, but is first to be restrained to subjects of *knowledge*, in the second place, to subjects of *revelation*, and in the third place, to *those* things which relate to God and Christ, and their relations to each other and to mankind.

Another instance of this restricted universality, is found in his prayer with his disciples. "As thou hast given him *power over all flesh.*" Here, too, the superficial reader would suppose that Jesus meant to say that God had given him the physical government of the human race. But here, likewise, the word is not *power*, but *authority*. Authority to do what? A commission to teach and to save all mankind who are willing to be saved. "*That* he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." And how was he to give them eternal life? By *teaching* them. "*And this is life eternal*, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." By communicating this knowledge, he was to bestow eternal life on *all flesh*, that is, all who would receive it. This explanation gives peculiar beauty to this prayer of Christ with his disciples the night before his crucifixion. "Father, the hour is come," not the hour of his suffering, but of his triumph, of his glorification. He forgets his own approaching suffering, and glances beyond to the glory that was to succeed, the spread and success of his religion. "*Glorify thy Son.*" Carry out thy great purpose of sanctifying and saving the world through me. "As thou hast given him authority over all flesh." As

thou hast made my commission coextensive with mankind, so let it be effectual to confer eternal blessedness on all who will receive it. There lay under this the thought of the extension of his kingdom to the Gentiles. This was to make a part of his glorification, as just before this he had said, when certain Greeks wished to be introduced to him, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be *glorified*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." By death, I shall cease to belong to the Jews, and become the common property of all mankind.

The language here furnishes a key to what was said of him on another occasion. Many times during his ministry, but especially during his last journey to Jerusalem, his disciples disputed which should be the greatest. To teach them humility, and what true greatness was to be in his kingdom, he first set a little child in the midst of them, and made him symbolic of the greatness of a Christian. He then, to teach the lesson of humility more effectually, took the place of a servant, and washed his disciples' feet. John, in relating this transaction, throws in the circumstances, which heightened his condescension, that notwithstanding the consciousness he felt of being so near the time of his glorification, and of his reception into heaven, and his knowledge of the fact that God had made him superior to all mankind, "had given *all things* into his hand," or, as it is elsewhere expressed, *given him authority over all flesh*, to be their teacher and guide to heaven, still he assumed a menial office. "Now, before the feast of the Passover, when

Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of the world unto the Father, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet."

Such, then, was the power given to Christ, not over the material universe, but over man, and not over man in any other way than as their teacher and spiritual guide. The honor, then, that we owe him, is not worship as our God, the Former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits, but as the Sent of God, the Revealer of his will, and the Promulgator of his law, the Representative of his authority; and the honor we pay him is ultimately given "to the Father who sent him."

There is an expression in the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, which, to some minds, as they read it, or hear it read, may have the appearance of teaching the Deity of Christ, the explanation of which may properly belong to this lecture. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is *the Lord from heaven*." Is not here a positive declaration, it is asked, that Jesus was man on the one hand, and on the other, Jehovah himself, come down out of heaven? This apparent assertion of the Deity of Christ arises from the ambiguity of a word,

and the use of a strong figure of speech ; and instead of establishing the doctrine of the Trinity, serves to show what false conclusions may be drawn from apparent facts.

The word “ Lord ” is ambiguous in the Scriptures. Sometimes Jehovah is translated Lord. Sometimes it is applied to Jesus. But it was likewise a common appellation of respect, addressed by an inferior to a superior, or by one person to another out of courtesy ; and was merely equivalent to our modern word, Sir. Christ applies it to himself in the capacity of being the Master or Spiritual Head of his disciples. “ Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am.”

There is another passage in which this word occurs, and which throws so strong a light on Oriental manners and modes of speech, that I cannot forbear quoting it at length. It will operate, I hope, as a caution to building hypotheses upon the customs and language of the East. “ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But, forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore *fell down and worshipped him*, saying, *Lord*, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” It is said that Jesus was God, because he was worshipped. Upon the same principle, this king must have been God, because he was worshipped. If Jesus is said to be God, because he is called Lord, so must this



king likewise be considered to be God, because his servant called him Lord. So Mary Magdalene addresses a person by the appellation of Lord, whom she took to be a gardener. "She, *supposing* him to be *the gardener*, saith unto him, *Lord*, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." The appellation Lord, then, in the passage which we are considering, proves nothing in relation to Christ's nature.

The figure of which I spoke, is contained in the words, "from heaven." I am now to consider how far these words prove that Christ came literally from heaven. The phrase, "from heaven," when applied to the second man, is plainly intended as an antithesis to the phrase, "from the earth," applied to the first man. "The first man is of the earth, literally *from* the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." Now Adam did not literally come up out of the earth. He was not made under the surface of the ground, nor was he ever below the surface of the ground before he was above it. Neither was he wholly of earthly origin. His soul was from God, or, in Scripture phrase, from heaven. So the body of Christ was from the earth, and partook of the same nature as the body of Adam. Their *physical* natures were both the same. The contrast between the two, then, is not as to essential constitution, but to *character*. The one was sensual, the other spiritual; the one earthly, the other heavenly; the one bore the stamp of mortality, the other of immortality. All this is confirmed by the next clause of the paragraph. "As is the earthy, such *are they also* that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such *are they also*

that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, *we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*”

It may be expected that I should take some notice of a famous text in the first Epistle of John, concerning the three heavenly witnesses. But it is now so generally regarded as an interpolation, by all parties, that it is no longer quoted by any well informed advocate of the Trinity.

# LECTURE X.

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS, X. 33.

HOW GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND  
WITH POWER.

THE subject of the present lecture is the Holy Ghost. And the points to be discussed are, Is the Holy Ghost a person? Is the Holy Ghost a Person of a Trinity, having in himself distinctly all divine attributes? These two points are said to be proved from the Scriptures. Texts of Scripture are alleged to prove these propositions. Other texts are brought to disprove them. The question is, On which side does the evidence preponderate? Is there sufficient evidence to sustain those propositions, *against* the evidence which is presented on the other side? The whole argument, therefore, is a balance of proofs. The way to proceed therefore will be, to bring up the texts on both sides, and weigh their force.

There are, however, in this case, preliminary considerations, one of which is this; Is the thing to be proved probable in itself? Is it a thing likely to be

true, independently of testimony ? Is there any intrinsic difficulty in the doctrine of a Trinity itself, which the personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost goes to establish ? Does it conflict with known and fundamental truths, and is the other side consistent with them ? I maintain that such is the case. The fundamental truth, both of the Old and New Testaments, is, "Jehovah your God, Jehovah is one." This doctrine asserts, on the other hand, Jehovah your God, Jehovah is *three* persons. The Bible tells me that there is but one Object of worship. "God is *a Spirit*, and they that worship *him*, must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." But Trinitarianism tells me that there are *three* Objects of worship, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and bids me worship *them*. It tells me that there are three Persons *in* God, who is *a Spirit*, one of whom is the Holy Spirit. Now the very idea of a Spirit *in* a Spirit, coëxtensive with it, and equal to it, is, in my judgment, a contradiction, and introduces into the mind the most utter confusion.

The interpretation, then, which attributes distinct personality and Deity to the Holy Ghost, is antecedently improbable. No defender of the Bible ought to admit it without the most unequivocal proof. In fact, the worship of the Holy Ghost is fast dying out of the world. It is retained in but two churches, the Catholic and the Episcopal. It is retained with them only by the circumstance, that they worship by written forms, which were composed before, or soon after the Reformation, before Biblical inquiry had searched into



the grounds of the traditionary faith of the dark ages. The worship of other churches, being free and extemporaneous, has conformed itself to the growing light of the Protestant world, and any address to the Holy Ghost, as a distinct object of adoration, is not often heard in any of them at the present day. This, I believe, can arise from no other cause than the fact, that the belief on which this worship is founded is gradually, though imperceptibly, becoming extinct. We now find multitudes, who call themselves Trinitarians, who have no definite belief in the personality of the Holy Spirit. That number, I believe, will still go on to increase, till the world will become practically Unitarian, without avowing the creed.

The interpretation which does not give personality to the Holy Ghost, has this mark of probability, that it maintains unimpaired the Divine Unity. It makes God one, in every sense. It does not multiply objects of worship. It rescues the Divine nature from the most irreconcilable contradictions. It injures no doctrine necessary to piety and godliness. It denies no influence of God upon the mind of man, which is suggested as possible by reason, which is taught in Scripture, and corroborated by experience. It removes all appearance of polytheism, which is introduced the moment we conceive the idea that we have to do with more than one Divine Agent.

It is, moreover, a historical fact, that the Jews, who derived their religious ideas from the Old Testament, the language of which, on this subject, is the source and basis of that of the New, never considered the

Holy Spirit to be a Person, nor do they to this day. It is a historical fact, that the personality and Deity of the Spirit were not asserted in the creeds of the Christian Church until three hundred and eighty-one years after Christ. All these facts render the doctrine improbable in itself, and demand, of course, a higher degree of evidence to sustain it.

Under these circumstances of antecedent probability and improbability, the case in the Scriptures stands thus. The words "Holy Ghost," "Holy Spirit," and "Spirit of God," occur in the Bible more than a hundred times. In all these cases, it is spoken of as a *thing*, and not a person, except in one conversation of Christ, in which he speaks of it as taking his place as the Aid, Guide, and Counsellor of his disciples, after his removal from them. In the Hebrew, there is no neuter gender. In the Greek, and through the New Testament, the words "Holy Ghost" are in the neuter gender, signifying that they are the name of a *thing*, and not of a person. The question, then, is simply this. Shall we make the almost unanimous consent of the cases in which the terms occur the rule, and the few cases the exception, or shall we make the few cases the rule, and the great majority the exception? Is it more probable that Jesus should have *personified* in one conversation, that which was really a thing, or that what was really a person, should be truly represented as a person in but one conversation, and misrepresented as a thing in all the rest of the Bible? This I believe to be a fair and accurate statement of the question. To my mind, this very

statement of facts, together with the considerations to which I have before adverted, comes very near to a demonstration.

I shall proceed then to consider, first, those texts which are relied on to prove the personality of the Holy Spirit, as to their force and conclusiveness ; and then select, from the multitude of those which go to prove its impersonality, those which are most plain and decisive.

The following are the strongest proof-texts of the personality of the Holy Ghost, taken from Christ's conversation with his disciples just before his separation from them. " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever ; the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth it not, neither knoweth it, but ye shall see it, for it shall remain with you, and be in you." " But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." " Nevertheless, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; of sin, because they believe not in me ; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this

world is judged." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak; and he shall show all things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

These quotations are all from a single conversation of Christ, and I affirm, that, independent of the general tenor of the Scriptures, which is altogether on the other side, there is enough in these passages themselves, to lead us to think that it is a personification, and not a person, of which he is speaking. We can see, moreover, *why* he resorted to personification. He tells them that he is going from them, but in the Holy Spirit, they shall have a Companion, who will remain with them forever. "I have been your Teacher, but you have but partially understood me. When I am gone, my place as a Teacher shall be supplied by the Holy Spirit, which shall lead you into all the truth. The world has not received my mission. It shall receive a convincing testimony from the Holy Spirit, which shall be my Witness, and testify of me. What I have said to you needs explanation. The Holy Ghost shall be the Expositor of what I have said. I have given you the Gospel, but you have not understood it." The Holy Spirit shall make you understand it all. He was about to leave them, and they would want a companion, a teacher, a guide, and an interpreter. He tells them that his place in all these characters, — for the comprehensive word, Paraclete, expresses them all, — will be supplied by the Holy Spirit.

That all this refers merely to the manifestation of



Divine power, which took place after Christ's crucifixion, and not to any person, may be made to appear in many ways. The first of the sentences, which I have quoted above, is taken from a paragraph in which he speaks of the *personal faith* of his immediate disciples. Philip had said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Show us some manifestation of God, by which we may be certain of your connection with him. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" To see God literally, with mortal eyes, is an impossibility. He can only be seen in his works. God is in me, and I am in him. God is with me, and in me, and manifests himself through me. "The *words* that I speak unto you, I speak not of *myself*." What I say is by the inspiration of God. "The Father that abideth in me, he doeth the works." I cannot work miracles by my own power. It is God, who works in me, and through me. "*Believe* me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and if not, believe me for the works' sake." Believe me, on my personal assurance, that there is this connection between me and God; and if you cannot take my word, believe me when my testimony is confirmed by the works themselves. They prove that God is with me, and in me, for without him I could not do them.

So much for his own miracles. He then goes on to say, that their faith in him should further be confirmed

by the miracles which they should be empowered to do *themselves*, when he should depart from the earth, for they should do even greater miracles than he had done. But how could the miracles, which they should be enabled to do, persuade them that *he* had a divine mission ? He goes on to explain : “ Because I shall go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.” Because your miraculous powers will be granted you in answer to prayers, which you shall make in my name, and when you are acting in my cause. Miraculous powers, granted under such circumstances, will prove that I am with God, and that my mission from him is a reality. Miraculous powers, when granted to you by God, in answer to prayers made in my name, will be to you as if they came from me, and have the same efficacy to confirm your faith.

He then goes on to add another idea ; that the Holy Spirit, the miraculous interposition of God after his death, would not only confirm their faith, but *enlighten* their minds, be “ the Spirit of Truth,” a spirit-revealing truth, and so take his place as their *Teacher*. “ If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments ; and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Teacher, that he may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth it not, neither knoweth it ; but ye know it, for it shall remain with you, and be in you.” The miracles, which will succeed my death, will be of such a nature, as not only to confirm your faith, but reveal to you the true nature of my religion, that it is spiritual, and not temporal. The world, the Jewish nation, will not be so

instructed. By the very fact, that I am taken away from the earth, it will be demonstrated, that my kingdom is not of this world. The powers which you will receive, will not be those which will enable you to *rule*, but to *teach* the world, and their symbol will be not a sceptre, but tongues of fire. My kingdom, you will perceive, is the kingdom of peace and righteousness within ; and you shall feel, and enjoy, and be satisfied with it. This will be too quiet and unostentatious for your worldly and ambitious countrymen, and they will fail to perceive and recognize it as divine.

In the next quotation the same idea is repeated, with the addition of another circumstance, that the revelation which they will receive, will be a *continuation* of that which they have received through him. God is the ultimate source of it in both cases. He had originated nothing, but had received all from God. The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I said to you, being yet with you ; but the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name," in furtherance of my religion, "he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The disclosures I have made to you of the Divine will, are from God. The miracles which will succeed my death will be likewise from the same God, and will complete the revelation of truth, which I have begun, will bring to your remembrance what I have said to you, and explain what is dark in it.

In the third place, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a *witness*, not to convince the disciples, but the world, the Jewish nation. There can be, of course, no personality in this. The Jews had no personal interview with the Holy Ghost. They did witness the miraculous works of God, which bore testimony to his divine mission. "If I had not done among them the *works*, which no man ever did, they had not had sin. But now they have *seen*, and hated both *me* and *my Father*." Here he calls seeing his *miraculous works*, seeing *God*, which explains what he said to Philip, in the beginning of the conversation: "He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*." "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear *witness* of me." Not to the disciples, of course, for he is not speaking of them, but to the world. And he adds, "And *ye also* shall bear witness, for you have been with me from the beginning."

In the next quotation, he explains *what* the testimony of the Spirit is to be, and what it is to effect. "But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But *if I go away*, I will send him unto you." It is evident that there is no person, or personal manifestation, here intended. If there were, no good reason can be given why the Comforter could not come during his ministry. For, being clothed with omnipotence, he might have convinced the whole Jewish nation, as well as made the disciples acquainted with the exact nature of the religion they were to teach



during the life of Jesus. But if we interpret the Holy Spirit to mean those miraculous events which succeeded the death of Christ, then we see the reason why they could not take place before his death. In the first place, his *resurrection* was the chief of those miraculous events, and that could not take place until he died. The next was his *ascension to heaven*, so as to be no more upon the earth. His resurrection demonstrated that he was the Messiah, for it was the test upon which he had staked his whole mission. The Jews had asked him for a sign, a miraculous proof of his claims, and he had said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." On another occasion he gave as a sign that "he should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." These signs could not be fulfilled unless he had died. His ascension was another sign, and showed the world, by his removal from the earth, without destroying his enterprise, that his kingdom was not to be of this world, but was to be spiritual, exercised by him, though invisible, through his doctrines and his institutions.

So broad does he make the meaning of the Comforter, that he makes it cover, in part, the ordinary and non-miraculous operations of God's providence, the punishment of the Jewish government and nation, which he introduces under the phrase, "the Prince of this world." After this explanation, we shall more readily perceive the bearing of what follows. "When he is come, he shall *convince the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, or rather justice, because I go unto the

Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” These miraculous manifestations will convince the Jews of their sin in rejecting me, of the justice of my being taken away from them in the midst of my beneficent labors, and that the calamities which are to befall and destroy the nation, are judgments upon them for their treatment of me.

It must be recollected, that the disciples were as much in the dark about Jesus, and his purposes, at this moment, as the Jews themselves. They had just been disputing among themselves, who should be the chief officers of his worldly kingdom. They could not even understand his explanation. All that he had said and done had been a perfect riddle to them. They wanted the interpretation of the same miraculous events which the Jews did, in order to enable them to understand both their position and his, and what he had taught them. Jesus therefore subjoins, “ I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now ;” it is impossible for you to understand what I wish to communicate. But these same miraculous events, which shall convince the Jews, shall enlighten you, and enable you to understand all that I have said to you. “ When he, the Spirit of *truth*, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth.” Not that it shall reveal anything new, or different from what I have taught. The Holy Spirit shall, indeed, predict future events, but add no new truth to my revelation “ For he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come.” He shall confirm my mission, and show the fulness of my communications,

in the fact that he adds nothing, but merely explains what I have said. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you."

Such is Christ's personification of the Holy Spirit. Such are the reasons for thinking that it *is* mere personification. He had been the companion of his disciples, by his presence to give them aid and encouragement; his place was now to be supplied by the direct interposition of Heaven, to guide and sustain them. He had been their teacher; henceforth their teacher was to be a miraculous Providence, that should explain more fully what he had taught when he was with them. His own miracles had been his witness to his disciples of his divine mission; now, the miracles they should be empowered to work *themselves* would answer the same purpose.

Not only have we these indications of personification, in the language of Christ, but we have his own interpretation of it from his own lips after his resurrection, and from the events themselves which he predicted. After his resurrection, we have his words to his disciples, repeating his promise, and they enable us to determine his meaning in the former case. "To whom he showed himself alive," Luke tells us, "after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God* : And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the *promise of the Father*, which, saith he, *ye have heard of me*. For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be *baptized with the*

*Holy Ghost*, not many days hence.” Here Christ is his own interpreter. He repeats his own promise, and by his form of expression enables us to determine whether, on the former occasion, he meant to say that the Holy Ghost was really a person, or whether he merely personified it. Here he says that his disciples shall be *baptized with it*, and compares it to water. Water is not a person, nor can men be properly said to be baptized with a person. In another place we have a *definition* of the same thing from the lips of Christ. “Behold, I send *the promise of my Father* upon you ; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye are endued with *power from on high*.” Here, what is in the former case called being “baptized with the Holy Ghost,” is called being “endued with power from on high.” *Power from on high* is certainly not a person, yet it is used as synonymous with the Holy Ghost, and with the Comforter.

We have a historical account of the fulfilment of this prophecy, in part, in the second chapter of Acts. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord, in one place. And suddenly there came a *sound* from heaven, as of a *rushing mighty wind*, and it *filled* the house where they were sitting.” “And they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Was this a *person*, with whom they were filled ? Not only so, we have Peter’s explanation of this matter upon the spot. “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel : And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out of my Spirit* upon all



flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Can a person be *poured out*? Can a *part* of a person be poured out? "I will pour out of my Spirit." That this was the very thing that was promised, we learn further on. "This *Jesus* hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed forth this* which you see and hear." Can a *person* be shed forth? A strong argument this against the Deity of Jesus, as well as the personality of the Spirit, for he is said to be *exalted* by the right of *God*, and to have *received* of the Father, of the whole Deity, of course, for Father is used as synonymous with God, the promise of the Holy Ghost. We see, moreover, that whatever power the Apostles considered Jesus to exert, during their age, was not *inherent*, but *derived*. When, therefore, Peter says to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk," he did not mean that Jesus would heal him by his own underived power, but that God would heal him, in testimony of the divine mission and authority of Jesus; for the Apostles afterwards pray to God, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth *thine* hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done, *in the name of thy holy servant Jesus*."

Not only is this promised Holy Ghost said to be *poured out*, *shed forth*, &c., but in this very connection

is called a *gift*. “While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost *fell* on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out *the gift* of the Holy Ghost. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost *as well as we*?”

Such, then, is the force of the argument for the personality of the Holy Spirit, derived from Christ’s personification of it in his conversation with his disciples. How far the force of that argument is done away by his own subsequent language on the same subject, and by the language in which the actual fulfilment of the promise is described, each one must determine.

I now come to the argument against the personality of the Holy Ghost, derived from the fact, that the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God are synonymous in the Scriptures. In one of the very passages which we have been considering, Peter says that the Holy Ghost, which was then shed forth, was the same thing that was spoken of as the Spirit of God. “*This* is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of *my* Spirit upon all flesh.” The phrase “*my* Spirit,” is as unfavorable to the personality of the Spirit, as the phrase “*pour out*.” One equal Person of a Trinity would hardly speak of another equal Person of the Trinity as *my* Spirit. We are further enlightened as to whether the Spirit of God is a separate person, by what is said in another place. “For what man know-

eth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Here it is said that the Spirit of God bears the same relation to God, that the spirit of man bears to man. The soul of man means man himself, and no one thinks of calling it a separate person. So, according to the Apostle, it is just as much an abuse of language to call the Spirit of God a person, separate from God himself. Peter says of Jesus, that God *anointed* him with the Holy Ghost *and with power*. *Anointing* certainly does not agree with the attributes of a person. This asserts that Jesus wrought his miracles, not by his own inherent power, but by a power given him of God. Jesus said of himself, "But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you." This is by Matthew. Luke reports it, "But if I, by the *finger of God* cast out demons." Nothing can be more evident than that the "Holy Ghost," "power," "Spirit of God," and "finger of God," all mean the same thing, and certainly no one would ever suppose that a person was meant by these various forms of expression.

It is recorded of Jesus: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also, being baptized, and praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, and a voice from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Afterwards it is said: "And Jesus *being full* of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and *was led by the Spirit* into the wilderness." He then went to Naza-

reth, and read from Isaiah, and applied to himself the following passage. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath *anointed* me to preach the Gospel to the poor, and hath *sent* me to heal the broken-hearted," &c. In one case the Holy Ghost *descends* upon him ; in another it *fills* him ; in another, under the name of "the Spirit," it *leads* him ; in another, under the name of "the Spirit of the Lord," it is *upon* him, because he is "anointed" and "sent" to do certain things. Is there any appearance of personality in all this ? Matthew applies to him a passage from the same prophet, Isaiah. "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased ; *I will put my Spirit upon him*, and he shall show judgment unto the Gentiles." Can this fairly be interpreted of a person ? Would God be said to put one person upon another ? Is it not much more rational and consistent to interpret it to mean miraculous qualifications for the office of the Messiah. It is said, moreover, of Jesus : "For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God ; *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*" In still another place, Peter says of him : "Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which *God did by him* in the midst of you, as ye also know."

The passages quoted above have a bearing not only on the personality of the Holy Spirit, but on what is called the divine nature of Christ. It is said that Christ had a human, and a divine nature. His human nature consisted



of a human body and a human soul. His divine nature was the second Person of the Trinity ; a Person possessing all divine attributes ; among others, omniscience and omnipotence. That Person making a part of himself, if this were a fact, *must* have qualified him for all the offices of the Messiah. But here we read that he did not commence his official work until the Spirit, which, according to the Trinitarian theory, is the third Person of the Trinity, *descended upon him*. Then he is *led* into the wilderness by the Spirit. Would he need any such leading, if his own being consisted of two natures, one of which possessed every attribute of the Spirit ? Would one Person of the Trinity be led by another ? He returned into Galilee *full of the Spirit*. How could that be, if one Divine Person already filled and pervaded his whole being ? He declares, that he casts out demons *by the Spirit of God*. He made no use, then, of his own divine nature, which was itself omnipotent. That is passed over in entire silence.

The only legitimate conclusion that can be drawn from this is, that his divine *nature* is a fiction, or rather a misapplication of language, and in fact answers only to this very Holy Spirit which rested upon him. And the very fact, that what was miraculous about him was ascribed to this Holy Spirit, negatives the supposition of any inherent divine nature in him. There are in the Bible many instances in which the Holy Spirit evidently means extraordinary or miraculous endowments, when no personality can possibly be intended. There is one in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, in which the connection serves as a kind of definition of what is meant by

the phrase. "And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots : And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*" The latter part of the sentence is evidently a development, or rather a definition, of what is meant by the former, and so enables us to understand what is intended to be expressed in it. No *person* can be meant by "the spirit of wisdom and understanding," or by "the spirit of counsel and might," nor yet by "the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." To this class of texts belongs what is said in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the means by which God confirmed the testimony of the Apostles. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." What is here rendered "gifts," is, in the original, "divisions," or "portions." Now, the Holy Ghost, if a person, *cannot* be divided or portioned out. Such language agrees with miraculous powers of different kinds, but does not agree with personality. And then, there is something marked in the language which attributes the whole agency to God, and the instrumentality only to the Holy Ghost, or rather to the miracles and signs, which are called divisions of the Holy Ghost. Now, the very fact, that God is spoken of as the only Agent in this matter, denies by implication both the Deity and the personality of the Spirit, for the word God, here, being without limitation, comprehends the *whole* Deity, and shuts out the Holy Ghost

from being anything more than a name for his agency, under certain circumstances.

Precisely coincident with the view exhibited in these two quotations, is that contained in Paul's directions to the Corinthians, concerning the use of spiritual gifts. All spiritual gifts, he says, are manifestations of the same miraculous power. They are all given to the ministers of Christ, to further the cause of their common Lord. They are all wrought by the power of God, who is the author, both of Christ's mission, and the miracles which confirm it. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." It is said by some, that here is mention of the three Persons of the Trinity in connection, each one of whom is represented as concerned in the working of the miracles of the New Testament. But as it happens, the third Person of this Trinity only is God, "the same God who *worketh all in all*." GOD, surely, is not a Person of a Trinity. The Apostle goes on to enumerate what these diversities of gifts, administrations, and operations were. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every* man to profit withal." That is to say, different members of the church have different gifts, all calculated for the edification of the whole. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to

another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as it will." It is said, that a personal act is here attributed to the Spirit, "dividing as it will." But this must be modified by what goes before, the representation that God is the *only* Agent. "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which *worketh all in all*." And by what comes after. "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all *made to drink into* one Spirit." That certainly cannot be a person, into which the Christians were said to *drink*, nor could the Spirit properly be said to *make* the Christians drink into itself. It was God, of course, "which worketh all in all," who *made* them to drink into the same Spirit, to partake of those miraculous powers which were conferred alike on all Christians, and signified that they were all alike Christians before God, whatever had been their original extraction.

There is another class of texts, in which the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit, are put, not for a Person of a Trinity, but for the very essence of God, just as the human soul, or spirit, is put for the essence of man. When we say that our *souls* are sad, we mean nothing more than that *we* are sad. The Psalmist says, in speaking of the omnipresence of God; "Whither shall I go from *thy Spirit*, or whither shall I flee from *thy presence*." Here "presence" and "spirit" are intended to mean the same thing, the fact that God is everywhere. What is meant, is defined in the next verse, for he goes



on to enumerate the parts of the universe where the spirit and presence of God are diffused. "If I ascend up into heaven, *thou* art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, *thou* art there." So in the New Testament: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit *of* God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." This, of course, can be nothing other than the Divine essence, which indeed pervades all space, but was consciously present in those who felt themselves to possess miraculous powers, as it is a maxim, that God cannot act except where he is.

I might go on, did space permit, to quote for hours, the different portions of the Scriptures which speak of the Holy Spirit, and give you an explanation of each; but I trust any more exposition would be superfluous. I shall merely mention two more texts, which are alleged in support of the Deity and personality of the Spirit, and then close with some general remarks.

It is said that there is such a thing as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and it is said to be more heinous than that against the other two Persons of the Trinity. "Wherefore, I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come." Mark tells us that the blasphemy, which was here rebuked, consisted in attributing his casting out demons, to

his possessing an unclean spirit himself. "Because, they said ; He hath an unclean spirit." This would be a valid argument, were nothing in Scripture said to be blasphemed but God. But this is not the fact. Moses might be blasphemed, the temple might be blasphemed, the law might be blasphemed, the king might be blasphemed. It was witnessed against Naboth : "Naboth did blaspheme God *and the king*." It was witnessed against Stephen : "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against *Moses* and against God." Likewise false witnesses testified : "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against *this holy place*, and against *the Law*." Blasphemy does not prove the person or thing against which it is uttered, to be God, or a Person of the Trinity ; for in that case, Moses must be admitted into the Godhead, for blasphemy was witnessed to have been spoken against *Moses* and against God.

The *law*, too, and the *temple*, are said to have been blasphemed, as well as the Holy Ghost. The law and the temple were not persons ; neither, by parity of reasoning, need the Holy Ghost be a person, from the circumstance that it is blasphemed. The blasphemy in the case we are considering, consisted, according to Mark, in attributing Christ's power of casting out demons to the devil, and not to God. It was unpardonable, probably, because it was an obstinate resistance of the highest evidence of revelation, and of itself made impossible any benefit from Christ's mission.

There is an expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is thought to prove, not only the Deity, but the eternity of the Holy Spirit. "How much

more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." There is scarcely a text of the Bible, which has been more misapprehended than this. Eternal spirit has here no reference to the Holy Spirit, but to Christ's immortal spirit. This is made evident in the following way. The writer is contrasting Jesus with the Jewish high priest, and Christianity with Judaism. The high priest went once a year into the temple at Jerusalem, into the holy of holies, into the very presence of God. Christ went once for all into God's true temple in the heavens. The Jewish high priest was mortal; in a few years he died, and was succeeded by another. Christ went into the temple in the heavens, after his resurrection, in a state of immortality, "by *his immortal spirit*, offered himself without spot to God;" not "through *the eternal Spirit*." This is made evident by several parallel expressions: "But this man, *because he continueth forever*, hath an unchangeable priesthood." "After the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of *an endless life*." "Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God through him, seeing that he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them." What in one case is meant by his "immortal spirit," is expressed in the other cases by "continueth forever," "endless life," "ever liveth." This expression then, which may to some appear, at first sight, strong evidence for the personality

and eternity of the Holy Spirit, has really nothing to do with the subject.

Such, then, are the arguments which sustain the belief of the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit ; such are the portions of the Scriptures which are thought to teach that doctrine most clearly. Such, too, as I have given, I conceive to be their true exposition. That exposition leaves the doctrine, as you must have perceived, no support whatever. The conclusion is inevitable, that it is a human invention, which has now become traditionary, and is handed down from age to age without examination.

But if it be not true, what follows ? Merely that the Christian world has labored under a mistake upon this subject, as it has upon many others. Nothing essential to Christianity is in the least degree affected by it. On the contrary, our religion is made more plain, reasonable, intelligible, and credible, without it than with it. Nothing that is meant in the Scriptures by the terms, "Holy Spirit," "Spirit of God," &c., is denied. It is all affirmed. It is all as true and important, on the supposition that the Holy Spirit is the essence, energy, or agency of God, as that it is a person. Indeed, it relieves our devotions of endless contradiction and embarrassment. It relieves us of the inconsistency of praying *to* the Holy Ghost as an equal Person of the Trinity, and then praying to God to *send* the Holy Spirit. It relieves us from the philosophical incongruity of supposing that two or three infinite Spirits pervade the universe, each of the same nature, and each possessing all Divine attributes. It brings us back to the



great and important truth, of One, Undivided, Infinite Agent in the universe, to whom alone all allegiance, and worship, and adoration are due. It leaves us unembarrassed the great and fundamental truth, the basis of both Testaments, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah your God, Jehovah is One."

## LECTURE XI.

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### THE ATONEMENT.

JOHN, I. 23.

THE NEXT DAY JOHN SEETH JESUS COMING UNTO HIM, AND SAITH, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.

IN treating of the doctrine of Atonement, which is to be the subject of this lecture, I shall first state those points in which all Christians are agreed, then the points in which they differ, and the reasons for which we adopt our views of the subject, and reject those which are regarded by some as vital to salvation.

We all admit the Atonement to be a reality. We all agree that Christ died for the spiritual benefit of mankind. We all admit that it was to procure the pardon of sin, and to induce man to forsake it; that it was "to take away the sin of the world," that he suffered. They agree in the historical facts, that Christ died a violent and painful death, in consequence of taking upon himself the office of the Messiah, the person promised in the prophecies of the Old Testament. So far the parties are agreed.

But different sects of Christians disagree as to the

manner in which this was effected. One portion of the Christian world has attributed the efficacy of Christ's death to the divine nature, which was a part of his person. The second article of the Church of England reads thus : " The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance ; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man ; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, *to reconcile his Father* to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of man."

After the discussion we have been going over in the ten lectures I have already given, I can scarcely believe my own senses when I see this extraordinary composition standing as the second article of the creed of that church, which has lately been making such claims to be the only true church of Christ on earth. It was *very and eternal God*, who suffered and died upon the cross, to reconcile his Father to us.

When we see such sentiments as these subscribed for almost three hundred years, by deacon and priest, bishop and archbishop, apparently without reflecting on the tremendous assertions they contain, we are tempted to fold our hands in despair, and give up all hope of ever seeing Christianity disencumbered of the speculations of the dark ages. The *very and eternal God*

was crucified, to reconcile *his Father* to us ! Let us see if there be any ground for such a supposition as the crucifixion and death of God.

We should be pointed, I suppose, to such passages as this : “ When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son ; ” and this : “ They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” This conclusion was arrived at, by supposing “ Son of God ” to be equivalent to “ God the Son.” But the shocking conclusion, that God died, one would suppose, would have led them to doubt the identity of the expressions, “ Son of God ” and “ God the Son,” and induced them to examine the subject anew. That examination would have led them to the conclusion, which we have arrived at more than once in the course of these lectures, that the epithet, “ Son of God,” has nothing to do with the nature of Christ, but is merely equivalent to Messiah. Some have seen the startling character of the proposition, that God died, or suffered in any way, and, moreover, the natural impossibility of one Person of a Trinity making atonement to another ; since, after all, there is but one divine essence, which is shared by the three Persons. They, therefore, softened the matter by saying, that the value of the sacrifice was enhanced by the fact, that the victim was connected in some mysterious way with a divine nature. But this palliation is no cure for the essential defects of the system, for such a connection must have *diminished the intensity of Christ’s sufferings*, nay, have reduced them almost to nothing. This supposition, too, is



at war with the narrative. That makes Christ exclaim upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This must have been uttered either in his divine or his human nature, or in the complex person which was made up by the combination of both. If he uttered it in his human nature, then his divine nature had nothing to do with his sufferings; and if he uttered it in his divine nature or his complex person, he uttered what was not true. God could *not* forsake him. He could have suffered, then, only in his human nature. All ideas, then, of an *infinite* atonement, from the infinite nature of the victim, vanish, and become impossible suppositions. To all this, the Scriptures oppose one uniform representation, that it was Jesus, the Messiah, who suffered, and died, and rose again for human good. It was Christ who died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. We omit, for the present, all discussion of the *sense* in which he died for our sins. But *Christ* signifies not God, but the *anointed* of God. The doctrine of atonement, then, has no connection with the Trinity, and all that representation which you sometimes hear, of God's sending his Son from heaven, or the first Person of the Trinity sending the second, has no meaning, no foundation whatever. For "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus, *who gave himself a ransom for all.*" Whatever atonement was made, was made by the *man* Christ Jesus.

The next theory is, that Christ suffered as a *substitute* for mankind, their sins being imputed to him, and his righteousness imputed to them. For this theory many

strong passages are quoted, such, for instance, as the following : “ Who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” “ For Christ, also, once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” “ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him.” Now there are insuperable difficulties in the way of this interpretation. The first is, that it involves injustice on the part of God. If Christ made an atonement for the sins of mankind, in the sense of suffering their penalty, then God’s justice must be satisfied, and mankind in equity ought to be released, just as the debtor must in justice be liberated when the debt is discharged by another party. It is injustice to exact the debt from the debtor and the surety besides. And *are* the penalties of sin remitted ? What *are* the penalties of sin ? They are the outward sufferings which it causes, the inward degradation, and the remorse of conscience which it occasions. Now it is by the will and immediate agency of God, that sin is so punished. But at any moment he might suspend or abrogate that law. *Has* he done so in consequence of the sufferings of Christ ? By no means. That law continues as much in force as ever it was. Another condition is interposed, that of *repentance*. It is a law of the mind that *repentance* shall be a remedy for sin. It changes the view of the mind in regard to it. It breaks off the habit, and by the benevolent ordinance of God, restores peace to the troubled conscience. The laws of the mind are such, that one man *cannot* take the guilt of another upon himself. What another man suf-

fers for my sins cannot relieve my conscience. It only *increases* my suffering, that my misconduct has been the cause or occasion of another man's suffering. How, then, shall we account for the fact, that such language as I have recited, is found in the New Testament? The key of these expressions is found in the fact, that the Jews always connected the ideas of suffering with sin. They seem to have had no idea that it is sometimes sent as a trial. Hence the question of the disciples concerning the blind man: "Which did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Christ was sinless, yet he suffered. According to their theory he must have suffered *for sin*. Whose sin was it? The only sins to which his sufferings had any relation, were those of Christians, in changing their characters and conduct. So, you will observe, in all these cases, the *innocence* of Christ is mentioned in connection with his sufferings. In the first case, in the following language: "*Who did no sin*, neither was guile found in his mouth." The moral purpose comes afterwards, and it is not so much the suffering for the sins that are past, as to produce a moral change in the sinner himself, "*that we, being dead to sin, should live to righteousness*, by whose stripes ye were healed," made morally sound, as well as abased for guilt. In the second case, there is the same mention of his innocence, and the moral renovation, which is the whole purpose of Christ's death "For Christ also suffered for sins, *the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.*" In the third case, there is precisely the same sentiment, conveyed in different language. "For

he hath made him to be sin for us, *who knew no sin*, that *we might be made the righteousness of God* through him." To bear our sins, and to regenerate us morally, are things entirely distinct, as much so as paying a man's debts is distinct from inducing him to become a sober and industrious man, able and willing to support himself; and the first is of small consequence when compared with the second.

The next theory of the atonement, is that which makes the death of Christ an *expiation*, a *propitiatory offering*, a *satisfaction* to the divine law. The law of God had been broken, and its honor violated. To vindicate its honor, it was necessary that some *victim* should be offered up, whose death should stand in the place of the penalties which the law inflicts upon the transgressor. To substantiate this view of things, such passages are quoted as I read at the commencement of this lecture. "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "But now, once, in the end of the world, he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

It is not denied, that the New Testament is full of such language. But the question is, what does it *mean*? Does it mean that the death of Christ was a *real* sacrifice, or only *like* a sacrifice? a *literal* or a



*figurative* sacrifice ? Then there is a question behind that : Is there any *intrinsic* efficacy in a sacrifice, under any circumstances, abstracted from the moral dispositions and exercises of those who offer it ? These are the questions which we now propose to discuss. I begin, then, by saying, that there is no intrinsic efficacy in any sacrifice, to take away sin. Go back to the very commencement of sacrifices, and the very first offering that was made. Cain and Abel were the persons who, according to the Bible, instituted sacrifices, and demonstrated the very principle which I maintain, that there is *no* intrinsic efficacy in a sacrifice. Cain and Abel both performed the same external act. They both brought a sacrifice to God. Now, if there were any *intrinsic* efficacy in a sacrifice, then both would have been alike accepted, and Cain's sin, which was then brooding in his heart, must have been forgiven too. But such is *not* the nature of things, nor the government of God. The *outward* sacrifice is only an expression of an *internal* sentiment. If the sentiment is not there, then the sacrifice is vain, and not only so, what it expresses is false. It passes over to a mockery of God. Sacrifices were not *intended* to be substitutes for moral virtues. This sentiment is often expressed in the Old Testament. Hear what Samuel says to Saul. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings, and sacrifices, as in *obeying the voice of the Lord* ? Behold, to *obey* is *better* than *sacrifice*, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." The prophet Micah has placed this subject in a strong light. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come

before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? He hath *showed* thee, O man, *what is good* ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly* with thy God ? ” Isaiah is still stronger upon the inefficacy of sacrifices, and the superiority of moral virtue. He says, that forgiveness shall follow, not the offering of sacrifices, but the reformation of the character and conduct. “ To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord ? I am full of burnt offerings, and rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts ? Incense is an abomination to me ; bring no more vain oblations. *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ;* cease to do evil, learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.* ” Here, then, is forgiveness *without* sacrifice, on the ground of repentance and amendment alone, to the *exclusion* of sacrifices, and sacrifices are expressly declared to be of *no intrinsic* efficacy. God declares himself ready to pardon those who *really repented* and *truly reformed*, even if they omitted sacrifices altogether.

Sacrifice was an outward act, intended to awaken and express gratitude, devotion, penitence ; but if they were unaccompanied by these emotions, they were of no avail. A lamb was offered up for centuries at the temple at Jerusalem, morning and evening. That hour was selected by the whole nation, as the hour of their morning and evening devotions. Their devotions, without doubt, were *assisted* by this fact of the celebration, at that moment, of a divinely appointed ordinance. And wherever they were scattered, on the shores of the Euphrates or the banks of the Tiber, they consecrated that hour to the remembrance of Jerusalem, and the worship of God. But if, at that hour, no thought had been turned to God, and no heart been kindled to devotion, the smoke of that sacrifice would have ascended to heaven in vain.

Then if the death of Christ were a *real* sacrifice, if it had awakened no penitence, and persuaded no human being to a new life, he would have died in vain. And if all mankind could have been converted to angelic purity and holiness *without* the death of Christ, we have no reason to believe that he would have died the bitter death of the cross.

Supposing, then, that we admit that the death of Christ *was* literally an expiatory sacrifice ; the question then returned, What *was* an expiatory sacrifice ? Had it any efficacy *of itself* ? Did it *expiate* anything without the moral acts of the person concerned in it ? It was necessary that it should be offered by the *penitent*, or it was of no avail. It derived all its value from the moral dispositions by which it was accompanied, and

without them it meant nothing. It was no more than killing an ox or a sheep under any other circumstances. David understood this in the twilight of the old dispensation. After two of the most horrid crimes that man can commit, he prays: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I bring it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are *a broken spirit ; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." The sin-offering, then, was in itself *no* expiation. It left the matter just where it was before. God looketh only at the heart ; *a broken and a contrite heart is the only sin-offering.* The outward offering signifies this, or it is nothing, and of no avail. Penitence, David assures us, is as acceptable *without* the offering as it is *with* it. But, if this be so, it may be inquired, what was the use of sacrifices, and why were they instituted ? I answer, that they were a form of divine worship calculated for a rude and barbarous age. They have no necessary connection with religion, as we see that enlightened men may be as religious without them as they ever were with them. They were universal among the heathen, before they were adopted by the Jews. They were adopted by Moses, for the reason that man could not step the whole distance from idolatry to the spirituality of Christianity at one stride. Moses merely made the change of directing sacrificial worship from the false gods of the heathen to the true Jehovah. Sacrifices were used for various religious purposes. They were used to express gratitude. A portion of the first fruits were



offered to God, to acknowledge that he was the giver of them. Sacrifices were offered as mere acts of stated worship, as in the morning and evening sacrifice for the whole nation, at the hour of morning and evening prayer, and by neighbourhoods, at the new moons, and on great occasions, merely as acts of acknowledgment of the superintending providence of God. They were offered in token of penitence for sin, as if to propitiate an offended Deity. When such offerings, under the Mosaic economy, received the sanction of God, they became the symbol and pledge, not only of man's penitence, but God's mercy. By their institution God pledges himself to forgive the penitent. Once a year there was appointed a general sin-offering. The parties represented in it were, God on the one hand, and the children of Israel on the other. And it was signified in this way. The offering was considered to be made by the whole people, through their high priest. The most sacred thing in their temple was the ark, and it was placed in the inmost recess of the temple. God, therefore, was represented as having his seat upon the ark. To represent the part which the Deity had in the general expiation, the priest went into the holiest of holies, and sprinkled some of the blood of the sacrifice upon the lid of the ark, which was called, from this circumstance, the mercy-seat. But, after all, this ceremony was only symbolical. It had no intrinsic efficacy. That day was *likewise* made a day of humiliation and penitence. "It shall be a sabbath of rest to you, and *ye shall afflict your souls* by a statute forever." If there were *no penitence in the people*, there would have

been no meaning in the sacrifice, and it would have been altogether useless.

Sacrifices were likewise made in ratification of treaties and covenants. It was so as early as the days of Abraham. God, at an early period, promised to give him the land of Canaan. In token of this promise, which is called a covenant, Moses is directed to take several animals, and sacrifice them. He divided them, and placed the parts over against each other. “And it came to pass, that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land.” So after giving the law on Sinai, the Israelites made a covenant with God to keep the law, by sacrifice. “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments ; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words, which the Lord hath said, we will do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning and *builded an altar under the hill*, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book and read in the audience of the people, and they said : All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, *Behold, the blood of the covenant* which

the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Such, then, were the principal purposes of sacrifices.

Now, after this explanation of the purposes of sacrifices, can we say that the death of Christ was a *literal* sacrifice in *any* sense? If so, it was a *human sacrifice*; and nothing can be more shocking than the idea of God's being propitiated by a human sacrifice. What are the conditions of a sacrifice? It must be offered by men to God. It must be such a one as it is lawful for man to make, and consistent for God to receive. If Christ's death was a sacrifice, then a murder may be a sacrifice. A sacrifice must be offered by some party or parties. Was it the soldiers, was it Pontius Pilate, or the Jewish high priest? Can a man be transformed into an altar? But it is said that Christ *offered himself*. If he did, *literally*, then he must have been guilty of his own death. Paul says of himself, when about to die in the cause of the Gospel: "I am now ready *to be offered*, and the time of my departure is at hand." On another occasion, "If I *be offered up on the sacrifice* and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." No man supposes Paul to have spoken literally. Nor is it necessary to suppose that Christ was a literal sacrifice.

What exposition is left of the sacrificial language of the New Testament, when applied to Christ? It was *not* a sacrifice, but it was *like* a sacrifice, and therefore it is called a sacrifice. There was a *resemblance* between the death of Christ and the expiatory sacrifices, because they were both the emblems of the mercy of God. Christ came as the ambassador of God's mercy, not on

the ground of his own future sufferings, but the spontaneous, unbought mercy of God. His mission originated in the Divine mercy. “God so *loved* the world, *that he gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In this embassy of mercy, he sacrificed his life. We have remission of sins through him, not because he purchased it, but because through him we have *repentance*, without which remission is impossible. As in the Old Testament the sacrifices were the *symbol of the divine clemency*, so is Christ under the New, and in so far, may be said to answer the same end, in the promotion of holiness and religion. As the annual sacrifice, in which the high priest went into the holy of holies, was a perpetual remembrance of the sinfulness of men, and of the readiness of God to forgive the penitent, (but not without their penitence, for that day was set apart as a day to afflict their souls, and mourn for their sins,) so the death of Christ upon the cross, is a perpetual memorial of the sinfulness of mankind, inasmuch as he died to bring them to repentance, and to assure them of the Divine mercy. In neither case are either of them, *in themselves*, of the least avail, without penitence and reformation on the part of man.

There is a *resemblance* between the death of Christ and the sacrifices of ratification, such as that of which I read to you from the account which is given of the covenant made between the children of Israel and Jehovah, in which they stipulated that they would keep the law. When Christ had given the new law, and was about to depart out of the world, he compared his blood, that was



to be shed upon the cross, to the blood of the sacrifice, with which Moses ratified the Jewish law, by sprinkling it on the people and on the altar of God. In instituting the Supper, Christ uses the remarkable expression, "This is the blood of the *new covenant*, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." As Moses had given a law to the Israelites, so had Christ given a law to *the whole world*, which is intimated in the phrase, "*shed for many.*" The Mosaic law contained provision for the remission of sin, at least for its ceremonial remission, in which the mercy of God was symbolized and assumed in the sin-offerings ; so now, though sacrifices were done away, yet the death of Christ might be considered as a perpetual memorial of the same thing. Besides, there is an evident allusion, in this form of words, to the most explicit prophecy there is in the old dispensation or the new. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them ; *for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*" This is the new and uni-

versal covenant, which Christ ratified with his blood, containing the promise of the pardon of sin ; but the *condition* of the pardon of sin, in this and all other cases, is a *moral reformation*. God's law must be received and obeyed. Such, then, is the connection of the death of Christ with the pardon of sin ; it does not *directly* procure it, nor could any sacrifice, under any circumstances, but is instrumental in procuring that moral renovation, of which forgiveness of sins is the necessary consequence.

Nor is the forgiveness of sins of much consequence, without moral renovation. The parent stands ready to pardon his repentant son, if he will return to the path of his duty. Society is sufficiently merciful to forgive the whole mass of the vicious who darken the moral atmosphere of this world. But the difficulty does not lie here. It lies in *producing* in them such a *moral change* as shall make forgiveness for the past of any avail. Accordingly, but a small part of the work of Christ consisted in his death ; and had he not been a *teacher*, his death would have accomplished nothing for the salvation of man. The only salvation for man is, to be inwardly regenerated ; that, Christ's death, without his doctrines, could not have effected. "The flesh," says he, "profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Such is the general representation of the New Testament. Christ died to give efficacy to his doctrines, and thus to promote our spiritual improvement. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by corruptible things, such as silver and gold, *from your vain conversation re-*

*ceived by tradition from your fathers*, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The moral purpose of Christ’s death is still more explicitly stated in another place. “Who gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*” It is not so much remission, as moral renovation, from which remission, with a merciful God, follows of course, that was the purpose of his mission.

Let us now sum up the results to which we have been led by this discussion. The first is, that the doctrine of the Trinity has no connection with the Atonement. The second is, that sacrifices have no intrinsic efficacy to take away sin, but were only symbolic of penitence on the part of man, and mercy on the part of God. The third is, that the death of Christ was not a *literal* sacrifice in any sense. The fourth is, that it is *called* a sacrifice from its moral effect upon the world, answers the same symbolic purpose, and in as far as it is efficacious in the moral regeneration of the world, it does what sacrifices could not do, reconciles an offending world to God.

## LECTURE XII.

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### WHAT IS SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST?

ROMANS, X. 9.

IF THOU SHALT CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH THE LORD JESUS, AND SHALT BELIEVE IN THY HEART THAT GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, THOU SHALT BE SAVED.

It is the object of this lecture to examine the nature of a saving faith in Christ. Salvation is said in the New Testament to be the consequence of faith in Christ. Now what was, and what is the nature of this faith,—what must we believe concerning Christ in order to be saved? This is a most interesting topic, for it is the point where the doctrine of the Trinity passes over from a speculative into a practical doctrine. It is often said of us, and to us, that we are infidels; that we do not believe in Christ, and he who does not believe in Christ is an infidel, and is lost; has no hope of salvation. We bow with all meekness to this sweeping condemnation, knowing that it is of little consequence to be judged by man's judgment. From that judgment we appeal to the Scriptures. We profess to believe in Christ, and according to the best of our judgments, we do believe in him. But to believe in Christ, we are told, is to believe that he is God. Not to believe



that he is God, is to reject him and to be an infidel. We say that a saving faith in Christ has no relation to his nature, but only to the fact that God sent him, that all he taught has the authority of God, confirmed by the fact that God raised him from the dead. The whole question turns on the true definition of faith in Christ. The Trinitarian affirms that it is to believe that Christ was God; the Unitarian, that he was *sent by* God. I have already, I hope, shown to your satisfaction, that the Scriptures do not represent him to have been God. To be consistent with themselves, they cannot represent it to be necessary to believe that he was God. I shall therefore go over the principal passages which define faith in Christ, and from them gather what it was. I shall then show how that faith is sufficient for salvation. I shall first bring forward what he said of himself, and then what his Apostles said of him.

There is one passage, which, if it stood alone, would be almost enough to settle this matter, in Christ's last prayer with his disciples. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." To know, in this connection, means to recognize, to believe in, and likewise to live in such a manner as to be answerable to their faith. Now if a man believes the Father to be the only true God, he cannot believe Jesus Christ to be God at all. He is shut out of Deity by the very terms of the proposition. Nor is it, according to the articles of this creed, necessary to believe that he was God. Eternal life did not depend on believing that he was

God, but that God had *sent* him ; the words are, “Jesus Christ *whom thou hast sent.*” It is necessary only to believe that God had sent him. These are the very fundamental articles of the Unitarian faith. We believe in God, as the only true God, and in Jesus Christ, as *the sent* of God. Can it be, then, that we are infidels, when we believe precisely what Jesus Christ told us that it is eternal life to believe ?

What it was to believe in Christ, we further learn from the language of Christ at the grave of Lazarus. It was from no motive of private friendship, that he disturbed the sleep of his departed associate, nor that he might gladden again the hospitable home of Mary and Martha. It was to promote the great objects of his religion, that he might awaken the faith of the world, and fix it on himself. Without faith in him, he could do the world no good. And that very miracle did produce faith in him in many minds. So much was this miracle the occasion of faith in Jesus, that when it was announced to the Rulers at Jerusalem, a council was immediately called. “Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we, for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.” “They consulted also that they might put Lazarus to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.” This miracle indeed was the crisis of Christ’s ministry, and as far as we can judge, was the immediate occasion of his death. It caused such an outburst of popular enthusiasm, that it determined the Jewish council to take strong, speedy,

and effectual measures to destroy him. Jesus and his disciples were then on their way to Jerusalem, to keep the last passover, and the miracle was performed at Bethany, only a short distance from the city. The multitudes, who were already at Jerusalem, hearing of this most impressive miracle, wrought in the neighbourhood, went forth to meet him, with branches of palm-trees, and conducted him to the city in triumphal procession. From this moment the council determined on his death. What, then, did Jesus himself consider this miracle to prove, and what did they believe who were convinced by it? Was it that he was God, the supreme Ruler of the Universe, and therefore able of his own power to raise the dead? By no means. Jesus took particular care to be understood upon this occasion. He uttered a short prayer, for the purpose of informing the spectators who wrought the miracle, and what it was wrought for. "And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always. But because of the people which stood by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Can any one believe that Jesus, at that solemn hour, could have said anything calculated to mislead the witnesses of that stupendous miracle, and to misrepresent his nature and his relation to God? If he had been God, and wrought that miracle by his own power, and to prove that he was God, was he not bound in candor to have said so? If it is necessary for his followers to believe that he is God, in order to be saved, how could he make this miracle bear upon the point that God had

sent him, "that they may *believe* that *thou hast sent me?*"

Jesus, in his last prayer with his disciples, more than once expresses the sentiment, that they were in a state of salvation. "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition." It is important for us to ascertain, for the purpose of our present argument, what he considered the instrument of their salvation. It was by faith in him. But by what species of faith? What faith in him saved them? If Jesus were the Almighty, his immediate disciples must have known it, if any persons. It is hardly a supposable case, that he should have failed to communicate to them so important a truth, as that he was their God, as well as teacher and companion. But if Christ's last prayer with them represents things truly, they did not believe this, nor were affected by his instructions, because he was God, but simply because God had sent him. "I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Now they have known, that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given them the words which thou hast given me; and they have received them; and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou *didst* send me." Now is it at all difficult to gather from this language the species of faith which the disciples had cherished in their Master, and which had been the means of saving them? They believed that his doctrines were from God. "They have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given



me, are of thee, for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them," that is, as the words of God. In other words, they believed that he was divinely inspired, and did not teach doctrines of his own invention ; that he was sent to teach what he did teach, and did not come among them feigning a mission which he had never received ; " and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me." Here, then, is a saving faith, which was exercised by eleven out of twelve of his first disciples, with the reason why it was a saving faith. And was it a belief in him as God ? Does such an idea seem to have entered into their minds ? Is such an idea alluded to in his prayer ? I see not a trace of it, but everything to contradict it. They had kept Christ's words because they believed, not that he was God, but had derived them *from* God. They believed in him, not as God, but as the sent of God.

Another passage, which is very strong on this point, is found in Christ's conversation with the Jews immediately after the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Those who had faith in him, he pronounces to have passed from death to life. But what was that faith ? Was it faith in him as God ? By no means. It was faith in God *through him*, or rather faith in his word, or doctrine, as coming from God. " Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." To hear Christ's

word, and to believe in him who hath sent him," is only another form of expression for this meaning ; " He who hears my doctrine, and believes that I have received it from God, hath everlasting life." Here, then, salvation is connected as before with believing, not that Christ is God, but that he is the sent of God. His nature is left out of the question.

There was another occasion upon which he expressed the same meaning, in terms still more explicit. It was after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The multitude which followed him expressed their faith by crying, " Hosanna, blessed is the Son of David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." When he arrived at Jerusalem, the evangelist relates, " Many among the chief rulers believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue ; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Their faith, therefore, was of a worldly character. They believed him to be the Messiah, but a worldly one. Jesus, therefore, thought it a proper occasion to explain what faith in him meant. He tells them that from him personally they have nothing to expect ; that belief in him personally meant nothing, except as he was sent of God, and in no other capacity than as a religious teacher and guide ; that those who obeyed God, speaking through him, would obtain life everlasting. " Jesus answered and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not

walk in darkness.” The belief here spoken of, is the belief in him as a guide ; not that he shone by a light which originated in him, but by one which shone *through* him from God. As the rewards which seem to come from embracing him as a guide, were not to come from him personally, as the Jews generally expected, so he says the punishments which were to follow the rejection of him, were not to be personal from him, but were to flow from the very fact that they disobeyed the word of God, which is the law of the universe, and which if any one breaks he must surely suffer. “And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not.” I am not to be the temporal king, which you Jews expect, “for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.” “He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words.” And here, by the way, is another confirmation of the view which we are giving. Rejecting Christ is here defined ; and defined to be, not refusing to believe that he is God, or any thing else, personally, but to be refusing to believe his words, that they are true and came from God. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which hath sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak ; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting.” What can be plainer than all this to show, that to believe in Jesus Christ during his ministry, and to obtain eternal life by believing, had nothing to do with his nature ? To believe in him, was to believe in God

who sent him, or that God did send him. The purpose for which he was sent, was to teach. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not walk in darkness." To believe on him was to believe on him as a teacher ; and the advantage to be derived from believing on him was to have a guide, or a light, so as not to walk in darkness. To refuse to believe on him as a teacher, is to refuse the only kind of faith that is necessary to repose in him. "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world." To reject him as a teacher is to reject him altogether. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him ; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." He himself is nothing. His doctrine is everything. His doctrines are certain of fulfilment, because he has received them from God. "For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak." Obedience to God in itself necessarily secures eternal happiness. "And I know that his commandment is life everlasting."

I shall now quote a passage to show upon what point Christ considered his miracles in general to bear. He offered them as reasons why men should believe on him ; but should believe him to be what ? According to the Trinitarian hypothesis, to be God. If we do not believe that he is God, we are infidels. But what says the Saviour himself ? "But I have greater witness than that of John : for the works which the



Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, *that the Father hath sent me.*" "And ye have not his word abiding in you, *for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.*" Now if Christ's miracles proved him to be this or that by nature, was he not bound to tell his disciples so? If it was vital to their faith in him to believe him to be God, or a Person of the Trinity, would he have said that it was only necessary for them to believe him only to be the sent of God?

What I have already said will serve to explain another formula of faith in the New Testament. To believe that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God, is often insisted on in the writings of the Apostles as vital to salvation. John says of his Gospel, in a sentence near its close, that he wrote it to give an account of a selection of Christ's miracles, which proved him to be the Messiah. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." When Christ asked the disciples whom they took him to be, Peter answers, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" This is said by Matthew. Luke says that his declaration was, "Thou art the *Christ* of God." Mark simply, "Thou art the *Christ.*" The different evangelists, in expressing the same sense, have given us different words, thereby showing us that they are all synonymous. These were expressions which were in use before he came, and had no refer-

ence to his nature whatever. To satisfy ourselves of this, it is only necessary to observe the conversation of certain Jews at the commencement of his ministry. It shows that the title, "Son of God," was not inconsistent with Jesus being the son of Joseph, and likewise what it was to believe in Christ at that early day. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him; We have found *him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.* And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see. And Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou *art the Son of God*, thou art the king of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." The point of this quotation is to show that Jesus recognizes the faith which Nathanael owns in him as the true faith. He had found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Entertaining that opinion of his origin, he calls him the "Son of God," and "king of Israel,"—that is, the Messiah. These phrases then can have no reference to his nature whatever, and must be wholly official.

The great point insisted on in the New Testament,

the great argument for faith in Christ, is his *resurrection*. Paul rests the whole cause of Christianity on this single fact. "Moreover, brethren," says he, "I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory that which I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." What did the Apostle consider the resurrection to prove with respect to Christ ? That he was God ? That could not be, because he says that the Apostles testified of God that he raised up Christ. Christ cannot *be* God, and be raised from the dead *by* God. But what connexion has the resurrection of Christ with the natural immortality of man, or the purpose of God of raising man to another life ? In order to ascertain this, it is only necessary to suppose that he had taught nothing, that he had assumed no character as the sent of God. In that case, it would have stood out as a single, isolated fact, with no other bearing than this,—that man is capable of immortality ; but as others are not raised in the same way, it would have made him the exception instead of the rule, and, of course, as he was selected and all

others left, that they were still to sleep on in eternal unconsciousness. But such was not the fact. He had been a teacher, professing to have been sent by God. In the name of God he had commanded men to repent, he had given them a perfect rule of life, and in himself a perfect model of humanity. He had promised immortality to his followers, and taught that man is immortal. "I am the resurrection and the life," he had said. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live." The resurrection of Christ, under these circumstances, was not an isolated fact. It had a bearing on all he had taught. It was a seal, that all he had taught in the name of God was true, for God would not have raised an impostor from the dead, nor by raising Christ given sanction to doctrines which were not true. Christ himself expressed the bearing of his resurrection upon his mission in one of his interviews with his disciples after that event. "And he said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things." Accordingly, the first thing the Apostles did, was to bear witness to his resurrection; and they founded on this fact his claim to the faith and obedience of the world. Peter, in his speech to Cornelius and his friends, states the authority upon which he comes to preach to him the Gospel; and it is, that God had raised Christ, in whose name he preached, from the dead. "Him hath God raised up, and showed him



openly, not unto all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he, which is ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins."

I trust it is unnecessary to make any further quotations from the Scriptures, to show that the belief which is represented in the New Testament to have been cherished in Christ, and to have been sufficient for salvation, had nothing at all to do with his nature. It embraced only his official relations to God and to men, and his official relation was proved by his resurrection, according to the words of the Apostle Peter. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." His resurrection is the foundation of our hope, because it confirmed his promises to his followers. Faith in him is faith in God *through* him. "He that believeth in me, believeth not in me, but on him who hath sent me." He believes that God will do all things which he has promised through Christ; as it is expressed by Peter in another part of the same epistle, from which we have just quoted: "Who by him do believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." Such are the uniform declarations of Scripture, and such is the meaning of that passage which I quoted at

the commencement of this lecture. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Such, then, was and is a saving faith in Christ. I shall proceed to show that this agrees with facts and the nature of the case. The spiritual salvation of Christians may be illustrated by the temporal salvation which the first believers experienced through Christ. Jesus warned his followers that Jerusalem was soon to be destroyed, and charged them as soon as they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, they should flee to the mountains, and were not to turn back and take their clothes. All who believed in Christ did so, and ecclesiastical historians tell us that when Jerusalem was taken there was not a single Christian within its walls. They all fled to a small town by the name of Pella, beyond the Jordan, where the Jerusalem Church flourished for many ages. They were saved by their faith, not the believing Christ to be this or that by nature, but by believing that he was inspired to foretell the truth. And no matter if they had thought him to be Jehovah himself, their faith would have profited them nothing, unless it had induced them to do what he had commanded.

Just so it is with faith in a more enlarged, spiritual sense. Men can be saved by faith, only so far as they are led by it to act, as far as it influences their conduct. Men can be saved by faith in Christ only so far as it leads them to do his commandments. No matter if a man believes that Jesus of Nazareth was the Infinite

Jehovah, if he does nothing in consequence of that faith, it cannot save him. No matter if he believes in an infinite atonement, made by an infinite being, his sins cannot be forgiven, unless he repents and forsakes them. A man can be saved from sin by Christ, only so far as he is persuaded by him to abandon sin. And he who is led to abandon sin, and lead a holy and religious life by his faith in Christ, has a saving faith in him, whatever he may think of his nature.

The relation in which Christ stands to us and God, is that of Mediator. He comes to reconcile us to God, on the condition of repentance and obedience. Our appropriate faith in him, then, is as Mediator. And it is a sufficient faith, the only faith which corresponds to facts. If I believe in him as that God, between whom and me he mediates, I only introduce confusion into my religious ideas, without adding any authority to his message. Jesus is our Teacher, and our appropriate faith in him is as our Teacher. If we insist on believing that he is God, we add nothing to the force of his instructions, because he professes to have received his doctrines from God. We introduce confusion into our own ideas, by making him to be God, and to derive his doctrines from God at the same time. The only way in which we can be benefitted by our faith in him as a Teacher, is to be persuaded to do his commandments. We gain nothing by substituting Christ in the place of God. We displace God, and lose the Mediator. We want God in the place of God, and we want the Mediator in the place of the Mediator. Be-

sides, there is no magic in any species of faith. It will produce effects according to its nature. The faith of Christians is not on the nature of Christ, for that is not a practical truth, let him be what he might ; it is on what he taught ; not what he is, but what *they* are, and may be, and must become. To have a saving faith in Christ, is not to believe him to be this or that, but to believe in the great practical truths which he taught. To believe in Christ, is to believe in God ; not because he was God, but because he taught us the most glorious truths concerning God ; that he is our Father, and loves us with a parent's affection ; that he hears our prayers and grants our requests ; that he is ready to pardon us if we are penitent, to aid us in every good endeavour. He has taught in himself what is the true end and greatness of our being. His sermon on the mount is an epitome of all human duty. And he has told us that " he who heareth these sayings, and doeth them, buildeth his house upon a rock ;" his hope shall never fail. If we have faith in him to do as he has commanded us, we are saved. To believe in Christ is to believe in immortality, for he taught it, and proved it by rising from the dead himself. The faith in immortality is the most ennobling that can be cherished by the human mind. The anticipation of a resurrection from the dead, raises man from a death of sin to a life of holiness. He who believes in the divine mission of Christ, believes in retribution, for he has so taught us : " They who have done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil to the resurrection of



condemnation. This is the highest motive that can be offered us to influence our conduct. He who believes these great truths, and lives according to them, is saved, exercises a saving faith in Christ ; whatever he may think of his original nature, "he is passed from death unto life."

## LECTURE XIII.

### ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY.

#### I. CORINTHIANS, XV. 24, 25, 26.

THEN COMETH THE END, WHEN HE SHALL HAVE DELIVERED UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD, EVEN THE FATHER ; WHEN HE SHALL HAVE PUT DOWN ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER. FOR HE MUST REIGN TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET. THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROYED IS DEATH.

IN the course of lectures which I have given you, in which I have quoted and explained most of the texts in the Bible which relate to the subject, I trust I have made it manifest that the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the Scriptures ; that God is one in every sense ; one person, one agent, one essence ; that Christ is one, one person, one nature, derived and subordinate, and deriving all that he was, from God. This is the conviction, I trust, I have produced or strengthened in the minds of those who have heard me. Still, I am aware, that there is a feeling in many minds that all is not explained. There is a magnificence of language used in the New Testament, when speaking of Christ, which to them does not seem appropriate to Jesus of Nazareth, in any imaginable state of glorification. It may be thought, that, after giving the explanations I have

given, I am bound to account for this magnificence of language. Then there is the fact, that the doctrine of the Trinity is actually in the world, and has been, in various forms, since the fourth century after Christ. How could it have become an article of faith, if it were not the original doctrine of the Church, the primitive teaching of the Apostles ? I shall endeavor, so far as the limits of a single lecture will permit me, to answer these two inquiries.

In the first place, Why is Christ represented as so important a personage in the history of the world ? Why is he represented as sustaining so near a relation to God ? Why is he called the Son of God ? Why is he represented as being “ exalted to the right hand of God,” as having power and authority, as ruling the world, as raising the dead, as judging mankind, as rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked ? Why do the Apostles represent him as an *actual agent* in the planting and propagation of his religion ? Why do they associate him with God in their salutations to Christians : “ Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, *and from the Lord Jesus Christ ?* ” In answering these questions, I shall give you a key for the explanation of all the Messianic language of the New Testament.

In the first place, with respect to the great importance attached to the advent of Christ. All who believe in divine revelation at all, believe that the Christian dispensation was a subject of a divine purpose from the very beginning of time ; that the patriarchal dispensation was preparatory to the Mosaic, and the Mosaic to the Christian. The Christian was to complete the series,

because it was perfect, and calculated to be a universal religion. The interest, then, of the ages both before and after Christ, centered in him. To him preceding ages looked forward, and to him succeeding ages have looked back. Christ is represented, therefore, as exciting as deep an interest in the divine mind, as he did in the regards of men. He is spoken of as being *revealed*, as if as it were that the Almighty had him already created to send into the world, when the time should come. Hence the language of Peter, concerning him : “ Who verily was *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you.” So Christians are said to have been “ chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.” Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, speaks of the same subject in the same way : “ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, *which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began*, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” In the same sense Jesus is to be supposed to have spoken when he said : “ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, *for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*” In still stronger language, he said on another occasion : “ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am he.” All these



expressions, I believe, are intended to express the same idea, the plan of Providence, adopted from the beginning of the world, and the important part that Jesus, as the Messiah, was to act in it. The Jews took the greatest pride in their descent from Abraham. Jesus means to let them know that he was a much more important person in the scheme of Providence, than their great progenitor ; that he had a place in the divine counsels *before* Abraham, and Abraham looked forward to him as his superior.

But why should Jesus, as the Messiah, be called “ the Son of God,” and made so near the Deity in power and dignity, be said “ to be exalted to his right hand,” &c. ? All this phraseology is derived from the peculiar form of Mosaic ceremony, and the constitution of the Jewish Commonwealth. It was a Theocracy, that is, a form of government which had God for its head. God was its Lawgiver and King, and in a manner, by his prophets, administered the government during the whole series of their legitimate kings, and indeed during their national independence. When they at length insisted on having a king, he was not chosen by the people, but *by God*. He was not crowned by the people, but he was anointed *by God*, through the prophet Samuel, and therefore was called the Lord’s anointed. Now the literal meaning of Messiah, is Anointed. So, in the original, both Saul and David are called Jehovah’s Messiah. When Samuel went into the family of Jesse, to anoint a king among his sons, he caused Jesse’s sons to pass before him ; and when he saw Eliab, the first-born, he said, “ Surely the Lord’s Messiah is before him.”

David said of Saul, when he found him asleep in a cave, "God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's Messiah."

These circumstances explain the peculiar phraseology of the second Psalm, which had such an important influence in shaping the language of the New Testament. In that Psalm, God, as the supreme King of Israel, is represented as having elevated David (or some other of the kings of Israel) to be his own associate in the Empire, as an earthly monarch adopts his son as a participant in the administration. To sit at the right hand of a monarch was the highest honor, and the sign of being exalted to the highest station of dignity and power under him. We have, at this period of the world, a phrase of similar import. To be one's "right hand man," means to be entrusted with power, and to be employed in the most important affairs. Zion was the chief mountain in Jerusalem, which David fortified, and made the citadel of his kingdom. Here God is represented as enthroning the king of his people, and promising to extend his dominion beyond the bounds of Palestine, and advises the neighbouring kings to submit peaceably to his dominion ; to signify their allegiance by kissing their superior, the usual sign of veneration and acknowledgment of authority in the East. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed," literally, his Messiah, "saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall

have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree ; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Such was the language of this Psalm, growing out of the Jewish Theocracy ; such was the language applied to one of their Jewish kings, in consequence of the fact that he was considered to reign with, and under God, over the chosen people. There is another Psalm, of a similar import, the one hundred and tenth, composed in praise of David, or some one of the line of his successors. "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." From these two Psalms, most of the language of the New Testament was derived expressing the dignity of Christ as the Messiah ; and it was this language which led the converts from Paganism to exalt Christ into a Deity, or a Person of a Trinity. The Messiah was expected as the son and successor of David, as king of Israel, and, of course, son of God, as

sharing his throne, he being the supreme King of Israel. This was precisely the meaning of the speech of Nathanael : “ Rabbi thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel,” while he supposed him the son of Joseph. These passages were the origin of those expressions of Christ and his Apostles, which represent him as being exalted to the right hand of God. For instance, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says : “ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.”

Carrying out these anticipations, at a later period of the Jewish Commonwealth, there are representations of the same character, which likewise had their influence in forming the language of the New Testament. “ And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” “ I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And then was given unto him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

These are the passages in the Old Testament, which exerted a controlling influence in forming the expecta-



tions of the Jews concerning their Messiah. During the four hundred years which elapsed between the close of the Old Testament and the appearance of Christ, these expectations assumed continually a more and more definite form. He was to be a king, under the theocratic idea of a kingdom, that is, under God. Instead of ruling over Palestine, he was to extend his dominion over the whole earth. His dominion was not only to be universal, but complete. *All* things were to be brought under his dominion. He was to reign *forever*. How could he do this under the present order of things? To meet this difficulty, they supposed that he would not only abide forever, but raise from the dead the saints of old, and make them participants of the blessings of his reign.

When Christ came and assumed the office of the Messiah, he adopted all this phraseology in regard to himself. He called his dispensation "the kingdom of God," which he, under God, was to administer. When he commenced his ministry, he preached that "*the kingdom of God had come.*" When he was arraigned before the Jewish council, for blasphemy, or profaneness, in pretending to be the Messiah, "And the High Priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell me whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus saith unto him, I am. And moreover *from this time* ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Here you perceive, that both the high priest and Jesus quote the Messianic language of the Old Testament; one in asking him if he was the

Messiah, and the other in claiming to be the Messiah. And it is remarkable to see the meaning which Jesus puts upon the highly figurative language of the Old Testament. "I am the Son of God, and ye shall see that I am the Son of God, because ye shall see me, *from this moment*, sitting on the right hand of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven." The phrase, "from this moment," shows that there is nothing personal in his coming, but that he means the coming of his kingdom, and the establishment of his spiritual power. Sitting on the right hand of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven, means nothing more nor less than that his kingdom is to be established and sustained by God. That crucifixion, by which they intended to disgrace him, and ruin his cause, was the very means of his exaltation, inasmuch as it prepared the way for his resurrection, which raised him to the highest point of human veneration. That Jesus used this language, concerning his kingdom, in a spiritual meaning, and with perfect intelligence, appears from his examination before Pilate. The Jews, who wished to compass his death by any means, had no scruple to represent him as making himself a king in a temporal sense, and, of course, as guilty of treason against the Roman Emperor. "Then Pilate entered again into the judgment-hall, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him; Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell thee it of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done? Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world*. If my

kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews ; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate then said to him ; *Art thou a king, then ?* Jesus answered ; Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness to the truth.* Every one that is of the truth, *heareth my voice.*” His only power is the power of his doctrines upon the human mind. Every man who owns allegiance to truth, is naturally and necessarily his subject.

But the Messianic language, current at the time of Christ, had a more pervading and universal influence upon the forms of speech, and the modes of representation in the New Testament, than would be at first suggested. Jesus often used the figure of “the kingdom of heaven,” applied to his religion. In correspondence with the general idea, he speaks of himself as a king, not only on particular occasions, but he has conformed to this idea his representation of his whole relation to the church. Much of this language is not immediately intelligible to us, because forms of government, and even monarchies, are very different at this period of the world, and in these Western parts of the earth, from what they were in the East, and in the early ages. Government was not then distributed into the legislative, the judicial, and executive departments, and allotted to different individuals, as it now is. The king was everything. He made the law, he sat in judgment on the transgressors, and he punished the guilty. To *rule* and to *judge* were nearly synonymous. The monarch

travelled from place to place, as our judges do at the present day, but with his court, with great pomp and splendor. Wherever he came, he punished the guilty, and rewarded the innocent. In the time of Christ, the king, or the governor of Judea, sat as judge. Thus Pilate sat to judge Christ, and Herod Agrippa, the king of Judea, sat to judge Paul, and Paul appealed to the personal tribunal of Cæsar at Rome. Jesus, when here on earth, as the head of the new dispensation, as king of the kingdom of God, executed that part of the functions of a king which consisted in promulgating laws. It was necessary, in order to complete the idea of a king, that he should likewise represent himself as the Judge and Rewarder of mankind. He, like the kings and judges of the Oriental world, must represent himself as *coming* to judgment. This is the explanation of that scenic description in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew: “When the Son of man shall *come* in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered *all nations*; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left. Then shall the *King* say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This is the completion of his reign as the Messiah. He has promulgated his laws, he has tried his subjects, whether they have lived agreeably to them, and pronounces sentence upon them accordingly, and then resigns his kingdom to God. That this



is a *scenic*, and not a *personal* transaction, he more than hints to us in another place. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the *word that I have spoken*, the same *shall judge him* at the last day." Those who are acquainted with the principles of the Gospel, shall be judged according to them.

Jesus, when here on earth, appeared to his disciples to be in closer communion with God, than had ever been vouchsafed to any other person. His wisdom was unerring, his character spotless, and he was endowed by God with extensive control over nature. Finally, he was raised from the dead, a distinction which alone lifted him above anything that humanity had ever attained before. After his resurrection, he did not depart into the obscure and unknown of the invisible world, but gave his disciples proofs of his continued existence, and a high state of favor with God, that he cared for his church, and had power to watch over it. Hence the language which is applied to him by the Apostles. His Messianic dignity appears in almost every page of the New Testament. During their lives, the Apostles considered him to be the heavenly patron of their great undertaking of evangelizing the world, to have obtained for them from God those miraculous powers, by which their mission was authenticated, and their authority established in the church. The position they considered him to occupy after his ascension, is exhibited in their prayer to God, after the miracle performed upon the impotent man by Peter and John, in the presence of the multitude at the temple. "Lord,

thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy servant Jesus, *whom thou hast anointed*, both Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by *stretching forth thy hand to heal*, and that signs and wonders may be done *by the name* of thy holy servant Jesus." Such a prayer as this is sufficient surely to determine the relation in which Jesus stood to the Supreme God, after his resurrection. They do not worship Christ, but God only. They do not consider him as working the miracles by which their own ministry was accompanied, but it is *God* who stretches forth his hand to heal, in furtherance of the cause of Jesus. He is not even called the *child* of God, as it is rendered in our translation, but the *servant* of God. And this, by the way, is one of the strongest cases in which our translators were biassed by their Trinitarian opinions. The very same word, which, two verses before, they render *servant*, when applied to David, two verses after, they render *child*, in order to avoid the unfavorable impression which the true rendering, *servant*, would make in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. Such was the state of opinion, with re-

spect to Jesus the Messiah, during the age of the Apostles. Such was the language they used concerning him in his state of exaltation. Hence his intimate association with God in all things that pertained to the Church. Hence they baptized in his name, into a profession of belief in his official character, as confirmed by miracles, or the Holy Ghost.

I have reserved but a small space for that part of my present lecture which was to explain the manner in which the doctrine of the Trinity was introduced into the world. We have seen that it was not contained in the Bible, and yet it was drawn from the Bible by the Christian Church, in the course of ages, although the Catholic Church of the present day does not pretend to found it on the Bible, but confesses that it rests on the authority of tradition.

The first cause that led to it, was the fact that Christianity gradually passed out of the hands of the Jews, or of converts from Judaism, into the hands of the Gentiles, that is, converted Pagans. The Jews always maintained, and have done so in all ages, to the present hour, the strictest ideas of the divine Unity ; and the Trinity is, at the present moment, the greatest difficulty in the way of converting the Jews. They understood the Messianic and Oriental epithets, derived from the Jewish Theocracy, which were applied to their Messiah, and interpreted them as they ought to be interpreted, of his official character, and not of his metaphysical nature. They had read in their Psalms such language as this, applied to David, whom they knew to be nothing more than a temporal king : “ Then thou spakest

in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help on one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant ; with my holy oil have I anointed him, with whom my hand shall be established ; mine arm also shall strengthen him. I will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, *Thou art my Father*, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." "Also I will make him *my first-born*, higher than the kings of the earth." Here David is called God's *first-born*, and he is represented as calling God *his Father*. Here too, then, by implication, all kings, on account of their dignity, are called sons of God. Much more should the Messiah be so called, on account of his expected elevation above all. No doctrine of a Trinity, then, could possibly have grown up among the converts to Christianity from Judaism. But soon the great body of the church was Pagan in its origin, who had been educated in Pagan ideas of God, and who had been accustomed to consider Jupiter, their supreme god, as a derived being, the son of Saturn. There was, then, in their hereditary conceptions of Deity nothing of that pure spirituality, and none of that unique and unrivalled supremacy, with which the Jews regarded their Jehovah, whose very name, in reading their Scriptures, they did not dare to pronounce. They began therefore to interpret the epithet, " Son of God," of the *nature*, instead of the *office* of Jesus. If he was the Son of God, then by nature he must have the same *attributes* with his Father, and of course be God, and by the most unaccountable process that the human mind has ever ex-



hibited, "Son of God" became converted into "God the Son," in contradistinction to God the Father.

Another circumstance, which contributed to the deification of Christ, was, that the prophetic power which rested upon him is called by John "the Word." Word, in Greek, signifies both reason and speech, and by the strangest fancy, they conceived, as Christ was the Son of God, and was therefore a derived being, that he was God's reason before he was generated, and he was God's speech afterward ; and that he began to exist in personal form when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The Greek philosophy, which then predominated all over the civilized world, had no little influence in forming the doctrine of the Trinity. Plato, who was the highest authority in philosophical speculation at that period, had broached some speculations as to the divine nature, which approached, in some measure, the early theory of the Trinity.

Another circumstance, which made the early Christians more readily fall into these heathen speculations concerning the nature of Christ, was their desire to counteract the opprobrium of following a crucified Master. "The cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks, foolishness." The Christians were not unwilling to favor a hypothesis which seemed to countervail the humble origin of their religion, and throw a glory over their head, by ascribing to him the highest metaphysical rank in the universe.

Another circumstance, which favored the formation and growth of the Trinity, was the peculiar form of baptism. This to a Jew was perfectly plain and intel-

ligible, and not liable to mislead them in the least. Baptism was a form of public profession first adopted by the Jews in receiving proselytes from other religions. The proselyte was washed, in token of adopting a purer faith, and commencing a purer life. Baptism was gradually used in various senses. By John the Baptist, the Jews were "baptized into repentance;" that is, into a profession of repentance. People were said to be baptized into things as well as persons. Paul tells us that Christians were baptized into Christ's death; that is, into a profession of a renunciation of the world. No Jew, therefore, would ever have considered the Holy Ghost, God, or even a person, because they were baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost. Nor would he have supposed that the Christ was God, because they were baptized into his name, because the Apostle declares that the Israelites "were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." There was no scrupulous adherence to the form which is given in the last chapter of Matthew. In baptizing converts from Judaism, the Apostles baptized them only into the name of Christ; they already acknowledged God and the Holy Spirit. It was proper, however, for the heathen to be baptized into the name of God, as well as of Christ, for they were converts to the belief that he was the only true God, as well to the belief that Jesus was sent by him to teach and save the world. But they might have acknowledged this without receiving Christ in his true character of the miraculously authenticated Messenger of God. It was therefore necessary to add the third article, the Holy Spirit, the seal of Christ's mission, for

the salvation of the world. Jews would never have built the superstructure of the Trinity on such a foundation. But those who had been accustomed to Pagan ideas, misinterpreted the form of baptism entirely, and imagined that these three articles of faith were three persons of a Trinity, and that these three persons were one God.

The work, however, of the deification of Christ and the Holy Spirit, was a slow process ; and that of the Holy Spirit is still but imperfectly accomplished ; for the mass of Trinitarians, even now, when questioned upon the subject, are found to have very indistinct impressions of its personality even, and many deny it altogether, and still claim to be Trinitarians.

It was not until the year three hundred and twenty-five, that any portion of the church could agree to ascribe Deity to Christ, and then in a sense, which, to a modern Trinitarian, nullifies such ascription entirely ; for the creed which was established at the Council of Nice expressly asserts that he is *derived* and *subordinate*. Nothing was established concerning the Holy Ghost, until the Council of Constantinople, in the year three hundred and eighty-one.

The history of the doctrine of the Trinity, may be seen by any one, at a glance, by placing under the form of baptism, which may be in some sense considered as the creed of the Apostolic church, the Apostles' Creed, as it is called, which was an enlargement of the form of baptism, and gradually took its place in the first two centuries ; under that, the Nicene Creed, of the year three hundred and twenty-five ; under that, the Creed of Con-

stantinople, of the year three hundred and eighty-one ; and under that, the Athanasian Creed, composed some time, no one knows when, or by whom, in the dark ages.

The form of Baptism you all very well know. The Apostles' Creed begins the work of enlargement by defining the sense of the term " Son," to be, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. " I believe in God, the Father Almighty," *one* God, all the ancient copies have it, " Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," &c.

What is very remarkable in this creed, is, that there is no allusion in it to Christ's preëxistence. All that is said of the Holy Ghost is, " I believe in the Holy Ghost," leaving every one to define for himself in what sense. In the Nicene Creed, you perceive a very different definition put upon the sonship of Christ. " I believe in one God, &c., and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the *only begotten* Son of God, *begotten of his Father before all worlds, God out of God, Light out of Light, very God out of very God, begotten, not made*, of one substance with the Father." Here you see, the origin of the Son of God, instead of being dated, as it is in the Apostles' Creed, at his birth of the Virgin Mary, is carried back before all worlds, and represented as being from the substance of the Father, proceeding as light does from the sun, very God, because *derived from* very God. The Holy Ghost is left, in this creed, where it was in the Apostles' Creed : " I believe in the Holy Ghost." But in the Creed of Constantinople, the same



sort of addition is made to this article, that was made in the article concerning the Son, in the Creed of Nice. That Council added : “ I believe in the Holy Ghost, *the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.*” Thus, you perceive, that it took three centuries and a half for three articles of a Creed to be transformed into three Persons of a Trinity.

In the middle of the dark ages, the Trinitarian hypothesis received a still further development in the Athanasian Creed, which goes on to define, with the utmost precision, the relations of the three persons to each other, but still did not claim an equality for the three, (the Son and Holy Ghost are *derived*,) at least not such an equality as would satisfy a theologian of the present age of the world. “ The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are each uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, almighty, God and Lord, yet there are not three Lords, Gods almighty, eternal, incomprehensible, uncreated, but one.” But the most remarkable thing about this creed is the material distinction which I am now about to recite. “ The Father is neither made, created, nor begotten. The Son of the Father alone, not *made*, nor *created*, but *begotten*. The Holy Ghost is *of* the Father *and* the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*.” But as a salvo to this, it adds : “ In this Trinity, none is afore and none is after another, none is greater nor less than another.” After the Reformation, this distinction of derivation was overlooked, and the steps by which the second and third

Persons were defined, were forgotten, the scaffolding was removed, and we have the Trinity, without any reservation of begotten or proceeding. "There are three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

I have thus traced the doctrine of the Trinity, from its germ in the prophetic and Oriental language of the Old Testament, to its full development in modern times; and I must confess, upon a review of it, that it is one of the most wonderful chapters in the history of the human mind. We see certain theocratic phrases, and the ambiguity of a Greek word, gradually prevail over the pure Monotheism of Moses and the Old Testament, and carry the world back into practical Polytheism, the introduction of more than one object of worship.

Such is the truth with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, as any one who takes the trouble to investigate, may satisfy himself. How long it will take the Christian world to retrace its steps, and return to the faith of Christ and his Apostles, it is in vain for us to conjecture. Nor is it a question in which we are at all concerned. Our duty is the same in any case. Our allegiance is to the simple truth. That, it is our duty to profess, and maintain, and propagate, as much when we maintain it almost alone, as when we are sustained by the concurring suffrage of the world.

## LECTURE XIV.

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### BAPTISM AND THE CHURCH.

EPHESIANS, IV. 4, 5, 6, and 11, 12.

THERE IS ONE BODY, AND ONE SPIRIT, EVEN AS YE ARE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL. AND HE GAVE SOME APOSTLES, AND SOME PROPHETS, AND SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

I INTEND to speak to you, from these words, of the nature and constitution of the Christian church. To my mind these two quotations seem to cover the whole ground of our subject, and to meet and answer the various questions which have been raised among the different denominations of Christians as to the original organization of the church, and the external form which it ought to take in different ages and under different circumstances.

It must have struck every one, I think, as I read these texts, that while there is a unity of the whole church, there is diversity of administration in different parts of it. While all belong to one body, and a common spirit animates the whole, while all have one faith,

one baptism, while all acknowledge one God and Father of all, and one Master, Jesus Christ, different portions of the church had different officers of instruction : “ And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” The common object of all was the edification of the church. “ For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The whole church was one in some respects, but then there were different churches having different kinds and orders of teachers. Now, to my mind, these texts cover the whole ground of the modern controversy as to church organization and government. To my mind, they seem to establish the following points, that the true church of Christ, in the sight of God, consists of all those of every name, and nation, and age, and kindred, and people, of all communions and sects, who by Christ and his religion have been made like him and prepared for heaven. They are one body, because they are animated with one spirit. One soul breathes through them all, the spirit of piety and benevolence. This is the church in which I pray God that my soul may be numbered at last.

In the second place, the church, as far as man’s consciousness is concerned, consists of all, who in their souls, believe in Christ ; that is, believe in him as Lord, and are, to use the technical language of theologians, united to him by faith. Lordship is simply authority. The allegiance of every human soul is due immediately to God. No being can have any authority over my conscience but God. But then he may delegate that



authority to another, and that delegated authority I am bound to obey, if he sends me the proper credentials that it is his authority.

Such credentials were the miracles and the resurrection of Christ. The moment that a man reads the New Testament, and becomes convinced that Jesus was sent by God, and was commissioned to teach what he taught, then all that he said becomes obligatory on his conscience. Jesus becomes his Lord, because he has authority from God, and duly authenticated. He is a believer, and is connected with Christ by faith, even though his allegiance is involuntary ; and it makes no difference whether he makes an outward profession or not, he is a subject of Christ, his own conscience judges his actions by Christ's laws, and by Christ's words at last he will be judged by God. If he keeps his allegiance, receives the spirit of Christ, and does his commandments, he will be finally accepted, for he belongs to the true body of Christ, because he is penetrated by his spirit.

In the third place, the visible church consists of those who profess faith in Christ and allegiance to him, by participation in the ordinances of religion ; and this is what is usually called *the church*. This corresponds neither with the church as it exists in the sight of God, nor in the convictions of men. There are those in it, whom God sees not to belong to the true church by practice, and there are those in it who do not belong to the church of Christ by faith, who are conscious to themselves that they do not believe in Christ in any sense.

Besides these different senses of the church universal, there is in the New Testament another meaning of the word church, a particular body of Christians united for their common edification by the ministry of the word and the celebration of the ordinances of the Christian religion. Paul writes to "the church which is in Corinth," to "the churches in Galatia," and the messages in the Apocalypse are addressed to "the *seven* churches which are in Asia."

I shall now go on to state in what consisted the unity of the church universal in the days of the apostles. "There is *one* body and *one* spirit." Here is a figure evidently derived from the human constitution. The human body is one because it is animated by one soul. So is the church of Christ one, because it is pervaded by a common spirit, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of piety and benevolence. And this, after all, is the only basis of true communion. It is of no consequence to me that a man communes with me at the same table, if I have no spiritual communion with him,—if he have not integrity, piety, and benevolence. It is of no consequence to me that a man communes at a different table, if, on becoming acquainted with him, I find there is a moral sympathy between us. In this sense, there is a unity in the church at the present hour. All truly good men have a moral sympathy with each other all over the world, and are prepared to enjoy each other's society on earth and in heaven. Not only so, this oneness of spirit makes the church one in all ages and all times. A true Christian now, is just what a true Christian was in the days of the apostles, because vir-

true and piety are forever the same. Human nature is the same, and its trials are the same that they were two thousand years ago. The truly good, who have arrived at heaven, are all of one church. All speculative differences have been removed by the light of eternity. The differences of modes and forms, of course, have become of the things which have passed away. They were in their own nature only *instrumental*, and having accomplished their purpose, they are forgotten. Of what consequence is it to the immortal spirit in heaven, whether the mortal body it has left behind was baptized with much water or little, provided the soul was baptized into the spirit of Christ? Of what consequence will it be to inquire, whether that body received the communion standing or sitting, reclining or kneeling, provided the soul obtained its spiritual life and strength from the words of Christ, of which the elements of communion are merely symbolical? Of what consequence will be the name by which the person was called, who ministered the word, which enlightened and sanctified and saved the soul, whether bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or even if he had no distinctive name at all, and were one of the brethren peculiarly gifted?

The second ground of unity of the church, which is mentioned by the Apostle is, that all Christians have "one Lord." What is lordship? It is simply authority. In the case of Christ, it is authority to *teach*, and authority to *command*, authority to *bind the faith and the conscience*. He treats Christ as his Lord, who believes what he has said, and does what he has

commanded. That this is the sense in which Christ claimed to be Lord of his followers, appears from his own words : “ Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not the things that I say ?* ” “ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* ”

Lordship may be original, and it may be derived. In the case of Christ, it was derived. For Peter declares : “ Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath *made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” All the churches, then, which were planted by the apostles in various parts of the world, were united in this, that they deferred to the authority of Christ. What he had taught, they believed to be true ; what he had commanded, they felt themselves under obligation to perform, because God had *made* him both Lord and Christ.

And so all Christian churches now, all over the world, have this common bond of unity, that they all acknowledge the lordship of Christ, they all defer to his authority. They confess their obligation to believe what he has said, and do what he has commanded. They differ as to the *grounds* of his lordship. Some make him Lord by original right, because he was God ; others agree with the Apostle, and consider him Lord, because God *made* him so. All receive his teachings as of Divine authority, and regard them with a reverence which they pay to nothing else.

“ One faith and one baptism ” may be considered



together, as they were intimately connected, one being the profession of the other. One baptism has here no reference to the uniformity of the *mode* of baptism, as some have supposed, nor does it refer, as others have imagined, to the fact that the ceremony was performed but *once*, but simply that the rite *meant the same thing* all the world over.

And what did baptism mean all the world over ? It was an initiation into the Christian church. It was a public profession of the Christian faith. And what was the Christian faith ? We have its fundamental articles in the form of baptism itself. They were baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But a part of this creed was held by the Jews before. They believed in the Father, in Jehovah, the only living and true God. They believed in the Holy Ghost ; they believed that God had miraculously made himself known.

But in order to learn what a man professed, when he was admitted into the Christian church, it is only necessary to go back to the first member that was received into it. And who was he ? Plainly it was Peter. Jesus, after exhibiting to his disciples for some time his credentials, one day asked them whom they took him to be. Peter answered, according to Mark, " Thou art the Christ ;" according to Luke, " Thou art the Christ of God." Jesus immediately calls him the corner stone of his church, or in other words its first member. The Jew then *added* to his belief in the one Jehovah, the belief in Jesus as the Messiah. When the Jews, after the ascension of Christ, were baptized

into the Christian church, it was not necessary that the *whole* form should be used, but only the name of Jesus. Accordingly, it seems, as we pursue the history, that in baptizing Jews and Samaritans, they made use only of the name of Jesus. Thus, in the second chapter of Acts, Peter says to the Jews, on the day of Pentecost : “ Repent and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ*, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” When Philip the Evangelist went down to Samaria, and made converts of the Samaritans, it is said of them, that they “ were baptized *into the name of the Lord Jesus*.”

But when heathens were to be baptized the case was different. They had known nothing of the Jehovah of the Jews. It was necessary, therefore, that they should profess belief in him, should be baptized into the name of the Father as well as the Son. It was necessary, too, that they should profess belief in the Holy Ghost, for this article alone established a peculiar relation between God and Jesus, which clothed him with divine authority. As was expressed by Peter on another occasion, in his speech to Cornelius and his companions : “ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.” Now, if a man did not believe that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, he could not be baptized, for he could not assent to the third article of the creed.

So, although the *form* of baptism was different under different circumstances, the substance was the same under all circumstances. It might be broken up into

three propositions. Do you believe in the one God, the Jehovah of the Jews? Do you believe that Jesus was the Messiah, who was promised to the world? Do you believe that his mission was miraculous, that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power, and in the other miraculous attestations of Christianity? If so, then you can assent to the Christian faith and be baptized.

This view of things is confirmed by the next article of unity: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Father, here, you perceive, is used as synonymous with God, as it is always in the New Testament. He is the Jehovah of the Jews, but not a national God. He is the God and Father of all, both Jews and Gentiles. He is above all. He has no one to share his Deity. He pervades all, and dwells in the hearts of all good men.

Here, then, we have complete the articles of unity in the Christian church. They had one God, the Jehovah of the Jews, and the Father of all mankind; one Lord and Master, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of the Jews. They professed the same faith in the forms of baptism, though they were different under different circumstances. They were pervaded by the same spirit, one soul animated them all, they were united by a moral sympathy, which more than anything else made them one body.

We now turn to the subject of the second quotation in our text, the *outward* organization of the different branches or portions of the church, and we ask, if there

was here the same uniformity? Had each particular church the same officers for its growth, instruction, and edification? Our text plainly tells us, No. These were different, under different circumstances. Christ, when he ascended on high, the Apostle says, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." In another place, the functionaries of the primitive church are enumerated in a manner entirely different. "God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, are all workers of miracles, have all the gifts of healing, do all speak with tongues, do all interpret?" In a third place, we have still another enumeration of the officers of the early church. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace given unto us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministry; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." The official men of the apostolic churches are enumerated in a fourth place in a manner and order still different, in a manner which intimates that the offices did not depend on ordination, or on conventional rank, but on personal endowment. "But the manifestation of the spirit is given to *every* man to profit withal. For to one is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the



same spirit ; to another faith, by the same spirit ; to another the gifts of healing, by the same spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues." Can any one from such passages as these, determine what the primitive organization of the church was ? Is there any modern church in which these different offices and orders have their representatives ? There is, and there can be no apostolic succession, in the true sense of the word. No uninspired man, by the comparison of the different passages, can now define what these different offices were, and how they were distinguished from each other. There is a church, which claims to be exclusively apostolic, because it is organized with bishops, priests, and deacons. But you search the above catalogues in vain to find the names even of either of these church dignitaries. There is no church on earth, which corresponds precisely in its organization with the churches founded by the apostles.

Christ, the Scripture says, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers *for the work of the ministry.*" Could this organization be perpetual ? Certainly not. Neither an apostle nor a prophet, who founded a church, could have for a successor an apostle or a prophet. As soon as miraculous powers ceased, they were, of course, succeeded by some other species of teacher under some other name. The church in the next age after the apostles, was instructed and governed in a different manner from what it was during their lives.

It is plain, then, that the outward organization of the Christian community was left to circumstances, that is, it was to adapt itself to the various conditions in which it should be placed. Christ's religion was a spirit and not a form, and therefore capable of such adaptation. It was to spread over the earth, and establish itself among every nation and kindred and tongue and people. It was to survive innumerable changes in the forms of society. It would have been a clog to its advancement, if it had been tied down to one set form and one unchangeable organization.

Christianity and Judaism were essentially different in their fundamental principles. Judaism had a ritual, the forms of which were prescribed to the minutest particular. Not only were certain things ordered to be done, but it was set down by positive statute, how they were to be done. The two ordinances of Christianity are commanded to be celebrated; but as to the manner, there is a profound silence. In Judaism, the priesthood was appointed to a single family, and to be transmitted from father to son, by lineal descent. In Christianity there could be no priesthood, because all sacrifices were done away by Christ's sacrifice of himself. Not only was there no succession of apostles appointed, but it was impossible that they should have any successors. Their relation to the church was peculiar, and could not be transmitted. There could no more be a succession of apostles than there could be a succession of New Testaments. The very phrase apostolic succession, carries in itself a fallacy. It suggests ideas which do not correspond to facts.

The Christian church was not modelled upon the Jewish hierarchy. It did not spring up in the temple. It had its origin in the synagogue, where a totally different order of things existed. Christ himself began to teach in the synagogue. In the synagogue the apostles commenced their ministry in the various cities of the Roman Empire. The organization of the synagogue is well exhibited, as far as our subject is concerned, by a glimpse we have into one of them in the Acts. "And when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the *rulers* of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation to the people, say on." After the church seceded from the synagogue, the elders of the church, likewise called overseers, or bishops, were the successors not of the apostles, but of the rulers of the synagogue. The rulers of the synagogue were men of mature age, of respectability and gravity of character, and of influence in society, who had the oversight and management of its affairs. Hence it is, that in the first churches of which we read in the New Testament, there were *many* bishops to one church, instead of being, as in modern times, *one* bishop to many churches. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with *the bishops* and deacons."

The office of teaching was not confined to the rulers of the synagogue. They might call on any one they supposed qualified by learning or wisdom or experience,

to explain the Scriptures, and teach and exhort the people. And so, in the case above stated, the rulers of the synagogue called upon Paul and Barnabas, though perfect strangers. And so it was, among other things, that the Christian church, when it seceded from the synagogue, took with it the custom of permitting every one to speak and to teach, who by wisdom, or piety, or learning, was qualified to edify the brethren. All were permitted to speak except the women. And hence it is, that teaching did not create a distinct order. As far as teaching was concerned, the whole church were the successors of the apostles.

We next come to the power of ordination. This was necessarily a part of the power of organizing churches. Every missionary of the new religion went abroad prepared, not only to make converts, but so to establish them, as that they might perpetuate their own existence. This involved the power of ordination. If they could admit into the church by baptism, much more should they have the power of ordination, by which the whole number of the baptized might continue to enjoy the blessings of the Gospel after the departure of the missionary. We accordingly read that the power of planting and organizing churches, was not confined to the apostles. It was likewise exercised by other teachers, for we read in the Acts : “ And at that time there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were *all* scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles.*” “ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution which arose about Ste-



phen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jesus*. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, *and turned unto the Lord ;*" that is, made a profession of their faith. This could be done only by forming churches and participating in the ordinances. Here, then, at Antioch, was the Gospel preached, converts made, and a church formed, *without the presence of any of the apostles*, by other Christians, who were on their way to Cyprus and Cyrene from Jerusalem, where they themselves had been converted. Whence could the elders or bishops of this church have derived their apostolic succession? They certainly could have had none. Thus we have the facts to interpret the language of the New Testament. To some churches, "Christ gave apostles, to some prophets, to some *pastors* and *teachers*," for the work of the ministry, and all were equally competent to its duties. To plant churches, involved the power of ordination, or, in other words, of organizing the churches they had planted.

The only official function of the apostles which remains, is the administration of the ordinances. And here we are in utter ignorance, as to one of them, how it was done. We do not know how the supper was administered, or by whom. We have no record of its having been administered by the apostles. Paul says expressly, that he did not usually baptize even his own

converts, for he says, "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel." It was considered a subordinate office. Peter did not baptize Cornelius and his companions, but "*commanded* them to be baptized."

Here, then, are enumerated all the functions of the apostles, except the intransmissible power of conferring the Holy Ghost,—teaching, ordination, and the administration of the ordinances,—and not one of them was exclusively appropriated by the apostles, but all possessed in common with other teachers. If they possessed no monopoly, no order could possibly succeed to their exclusive rights. The pretensions, then, of bishops to do anything in the church, which other ministers cannot do, are totally groundless.

That elders and bishops were the same, is clearly proved from the twentieth chapter of Acts. When Paul was on his journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, we read, that he stopped at Miletus, and sent to Ephesus for the *elders* of the church. When they were come to Miletus, he made them a long speech concerning their duties and responsibilities. Among other things, he said to them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*." And here, let me observe, is a most remarkable instance of disingenuousness on the part of the Episcopal translators of our Bible. They did not render the word *episcopus*, bishop, here, as they have done in other cases, for two obvious reasons. One was, that it would show that bishops and elders were the same. For Paul sent to Ephesus for the

*elders* of the church, and when they were come, he addressed them as *bishops*, proving that bishops and elders were the same, which is ruinous to the claims of exclusive Episcopacy. The other reason was, that this text shows, that there were more bishops than one in the church of Ephesus. The admission that there were more bishops than one in a single church, or even a single city, is as fatal to the cause of exclusive Episcopacy, as the admission that bishop and elder, or presbyter, were originally the same.

And yet, we are told, that “there cannot be a church without a bishop.” If the above representation is true, the primitive churches had not one, but several. If it be meant by this, that there cannot be a church without an officer precisely corresponding with the ancient elder or bishop, then there is no church on earth. The circumstances of the church have changed, and the organization of the church has changed with them. This being the case, the question whether there can be a church without a bishop, is a dispute about “words and names” of no sort of importance. We are told, too, that the ministrations of all church officers are invalid, except of those who have been ordained by a person called a bishop, which *name* has been transmitted in direct line from the apostles; whereas we have shown, that churches were formed and organized by ordination, *where no apostle had ever been*.

We are told, moreover, that there is an *intrinsic* efficacy in the ordinances, that certain persons, called by certain names, have the power to communicate a peculiar, spiritual virtue to the elements of communion,

whereas we do not find that the apostles themselves claimed any such faculty, or even with their own hands administered the communion at all. And as to baptism, for which so much is now claimed, it does not seem that any office in the church was necessary to its administration. The apostles appear to have delegated it to inferior hands.

I have said, that the organization of the primitive churches, appears to have been the result of circumstances. Most particularly so was it with a class of officers, of which I am now about to speak, the deacons.

Soon after the formation of the church at Jerusalem, a charity sprung up in it, which the apostles had not time to manage, without neglecting what was of much greater importance, the preaching of the word. They therefore requested that others might be appointed to this trust. "It is not meet," said they, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you, seven men, of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may set over this business." Seven men were accordingly chosen, and ordained to this office. Is it not plain, that this office was created for the occasion? Is it not plain, that the charity gave birth to the office, and not any previous plan or foresight of Christ or his apostles? The plan was adopted by other churches, because the custom was universal in the first ages, of providing for the poor. And yet we have an order, in some of our churches, who claim to be the lineal successors of these deacons, whose office



has nothing to do with the poor, but who give themselves entirely to the ministration of the word and ordinances, and do everything that any ministers claim to do, except confirm and ordain.

In the apostolic times, we read of no hierarchy in the church, no subordination among the apostles. Paul claimed a full equality with the rest. "I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," and he on one occasion publicly reproved Peter, who has since been considered to have had a primacy among them. If there was any one, to whom a special deference was paid, it was James, who seems to have presided over the church at Jerusalem. So far as we are informed, the churches were perfectly independent of each other, and acknowledged no head but Christ. Paul reproves the Corinthians for saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas: Is Christ divided?"

It would have been a radical defect in the organization of the primitive churches, if they had not been perfectly independent of each other. They could not have answered the purpose of churches, if they had not had individually all the powers and faculties of a church. There must have been, in the nature of things, some officer in every church, capable of discharging *all* the functions of a minister of Christ, or the power would have been defective of carrying out the very purposes of the existence of a church. Without the power to ordain, no church could have had the means of perpetuating itself. Its very existence would have depended on the will of a person or persons foreign to it. If it be meant by the saying, "There

can be no church without a bishop," that there can be no church without an officer, or officers, who have the authority to ordain, it is perfectly true, but it entirely destroys the relation of bishop to more than one church.

With the right of ordination goes the right of administering the sacraments. If the officers of any particular church have not the power to perpetuate themselves, then their church may be at any moment cut off from the possession of the Christian ordinances, and indeed all Christian privileges, and the door is opened to the greatest tyranny and oppression. And the church which gives up this power is instantly enslaved. Accordingly, this was the point in which the liberties of the Christian world first began to be invaded, and the simple power of ordination was the engine by which a domination was established in Europe, at which nations bowed down, and monarchs trembled on their thrones.

Another conspicuous feature of the early church, was its popular character. In fact, Christianity is the mother of all the free governments which now exist upon the earth. The apostles did not fill the place of Judas by their own election. The whole church chose two candidates, and then they cast lots between them. The seven deacons, too, were chosen by popular vote.

What then are the points, which we may consider established with regard to the primitive church? That it was one with respect to its faith, one in respect to the God whom it worshipped, one in regard to the Master it obeyed, and one as respects its spirit and character.

The outward form and organization of the church was the result of circumstances, not ordained by Christ, nor made a subject of perpetual enactment by the apostles. Its officers were the result of circumstances, and many of them could not be permanent, nor have any successors. Teaching was not appropriated by any class or order, but was exercised by all. There was no subordination among the apostles, and the churches were independent of each other ; and, moreover, the power was evidently with the people, and officers were chosen by popular election.

But no sooner were the apostles dead, than what did the world see take place in the Christian church ? From these humble beginnings, a most magnificent edifice was constructed. One elder of a church, from the mere necessity of having a presiding officer, began to assume superiority over the others, and to appropriate to himself the name of bishop, which was at first common to them all. Parent churches assumed superiority over their colonies and dependencies, and one of the elders of a church soon found himself the bishop of a city, then of a province, then of all Christendom. And the same causes which made the churches of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, the Metropolitan churches of their respective provinces, made the church of Rome the mistress of the world. Then came the ages of darkness and superstition, when the Roman Empire fell in ruins, and the Pope, in fact, stepped into the vacant throne of the Cæsars, and the successor of the humble fishermen of Galilee summoned the kings of the earth to do him homage, drew to Rome the riches of the nations, and

assumed the prerogative of God himself, of opening or shutting the gates of heaven upon mankind.

But the bishops, in order to confirm and perpetuate their own supremacy, *were compelled to claim to do something which no one else could do.* They assumed the right of making each other forever, and they invented a new rite, which neither Christ nor his apostles had instituted, that of confirmation, and which none but themselves had the authority to administer.

A new species of unity was introduced. All men must acknowledge, not only one God, and one Lord, but one bishop. In the meantime, by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, the church became amalgamated with the civil power, and then force took the place of truth, and authority of conviction. But this new species of unity, enforced by external power, became instantly fatal to the true unity, that of the spirit. Unity of conviction never can be enforced, though a thousand Emperors conspire to decree it. The unity of faith became broken by the very attempts which were made to preserve it. There was in the church originally, but one faith, expressed in the form of baptism. But soon men began to speculate as to the meaning of its terms. Its second article, so intelligible to a Jew, "I believe in Jesus, as the Son of God, or the promised Messiah," the convert from Paganism began to interpret in a different sense. He changed the word Son, from an official to a literal signification. He said that Jesus was the Son of God, not because God sent him, but because he was begotten of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost. Another said that he was the Son of God, because he was be-



gotten by the Father out of his own substance, before all worlds. At the conversion of Constantine, those who held this last opinion as to the metaphysical nature of Christ, happened to be in the majority in the church, at the command of the Roman Emperor they assembled and *altered* the original creed, by inserting into it their interpretation of its terms, and Constantine by his sword forced it upon the church universal. Those who refused to subscribe to it, were not only excommunicated from the church, but banished like criminals by the civil power, and the unity of the church from a unity of spirit, became a unity of oppression. This amalgamation of church and state, consummated by Constantine, in the fourth century, was perpetuated till the formation of the American constitution. It was shaken by the Reformation, but not dissolved, in any nation of Europe. And strange as it may seem, the Nicene Creed, the first fruit of this unholy alliance, still continues to be recited in some of the churches of the United States, with as much solemnity, and apparently as of as much authority, as the Bible itself.

And here, friends and fellow-citizens, in our glorious Republic, the church being severed from the civil power, the great and last experiment of Christianity is working itself out. The church is returning to the only unity that it ever can possess on earth, that of the spirit. Deprived of the external pressure which forced them upon mankind, church creeds and organizations are falling to pieces, and are found to be nothing but a rope of sand. Every church is becoming, as it was at the beginning, essentially independent. There is not a bishop nor ec-

clesiastical association, which dares lay a rude hand on any faithful minister of Christ, or sever the bond which unites minister and people. The more the experiment is tried, the more it will be shown, that every society of Christians possesses within itself, all the powers of a Christian church, and will always exercise them in a free country.

An attempt has been made within a few years to revive the obsolete claims of bishops to a monopoly of power, and of the church universal to legislate for the churches particular. But I believe, that attempt has been looked upon by the American people with unmingled disgust. The spirit of that movement was manifested too soon. It spoke out on a late occasion in the metropolis of this country, in an unguarded moment of passion in a public assembly, from the lips of a dignitary of the American church, silencing in a moment the voice of complaint and remonstrance. Who did not hear in this, the echo of the thunders of the Vatican? Who did not recognize in it the tendency of all church organization, the language of every hierarchy, which has ever claimed dominion by divine right? What American citizen and Christian did not feel himself oppressed and insulted, in the person of his fellow-citizen and Christian who was thus put down? What American did not hear in those words, his own fate, if any one denomination were allowed to obtain political ascendancy in this country? In this country, if anywhere, the unity of the church will be restored, — but how? By reversing the process by which it has become divided. Division may perhaps, go on a while longer. But it must at

length run itself out. Beyond a certain point, religious institutions cannot be supported. When that point is reached, men must come together, in order to enjoy even the preaching of the Gospel. And how can this be done? Only by each party dropping, or waiving, the peculiarities on which they have insisted, and sustaining only the principles which they hold in common. They may not give up their partiality for certain forms, but they will cease to consider them as essential to salvation. The first step toward outward unity, will be the unity of the spirit, the spirit of their common Master. When this is attained, every thing else will be comparatively easy. True Christians will not be kept apart by their preferences for different forms, and will consider them no longer a sufficient ground of separation.

When this takes place, there will be one baptism. Not that there is more than one now, but all will come to see and acknowledge, that its meaning is essentially the same in all modes of administration. There will be one faith. Not that the private opinions of all Christians are ever to be the same, but the faith which they will require in others in order to their admission to the privileges of Christians, will be such as all can receive. In searching for a common creed, they will find their way back to the simple form of baptism, which was the primitive creed, a belief in God, in Christ, as the sent of God, and the miraculous origin of Christianity. To this creed all Christians of every name and denomination will assent. There will be one Lord. All Christians will own Jesus as their Master, which is the meaning of Lord. There may be many still, who will believe Jesus

to be God, as well as Lord, but they will be convinced that they must not force their opinions upon those who are willing to abide by the simple declarations of the Scriptures. They will have one God, the Father of all, the Father of Christ as well as of Christians. When these changes take place, the church will once more be one, in the only sense in which it ever can be one on earth. With the increase of knowledge and piety in the church universal, the questions which are now discussed between particular portions of it, will seem each year of less and less consequence. The question of the real presence in the eucharist, will be seen to be, as it is, a question of words and metaphysical distinctions, of no practical importance whatever. Their true place will be assigned to all mere forms and ceremonies, and that is among the *instruments of edification*, instead of being made, as they are now by some, essential to salvation. The ministry of the word, and the maintenance of a day set apart for that purpose, will be seen to be the *principal* means of the salvation of the soul. What the man shall be called, who, after due preparation stands up as the Ambassador of Christ, to dispense that word, which is spirit and life, will be perceived to be of little importance, whether bishop or priest, or deacon, or elder, or even if he should have no name at all. A more important inquiry will be, whether he be a man of piety, zeal, wisdom, talents, learning, patience, disinterestedness. Nor will those who are moved, instructed, and edified, by his preaching, be very anxious who ordained him, whether a bishop, who presumes without evidence, that he derives his authority in unbroken succession from the

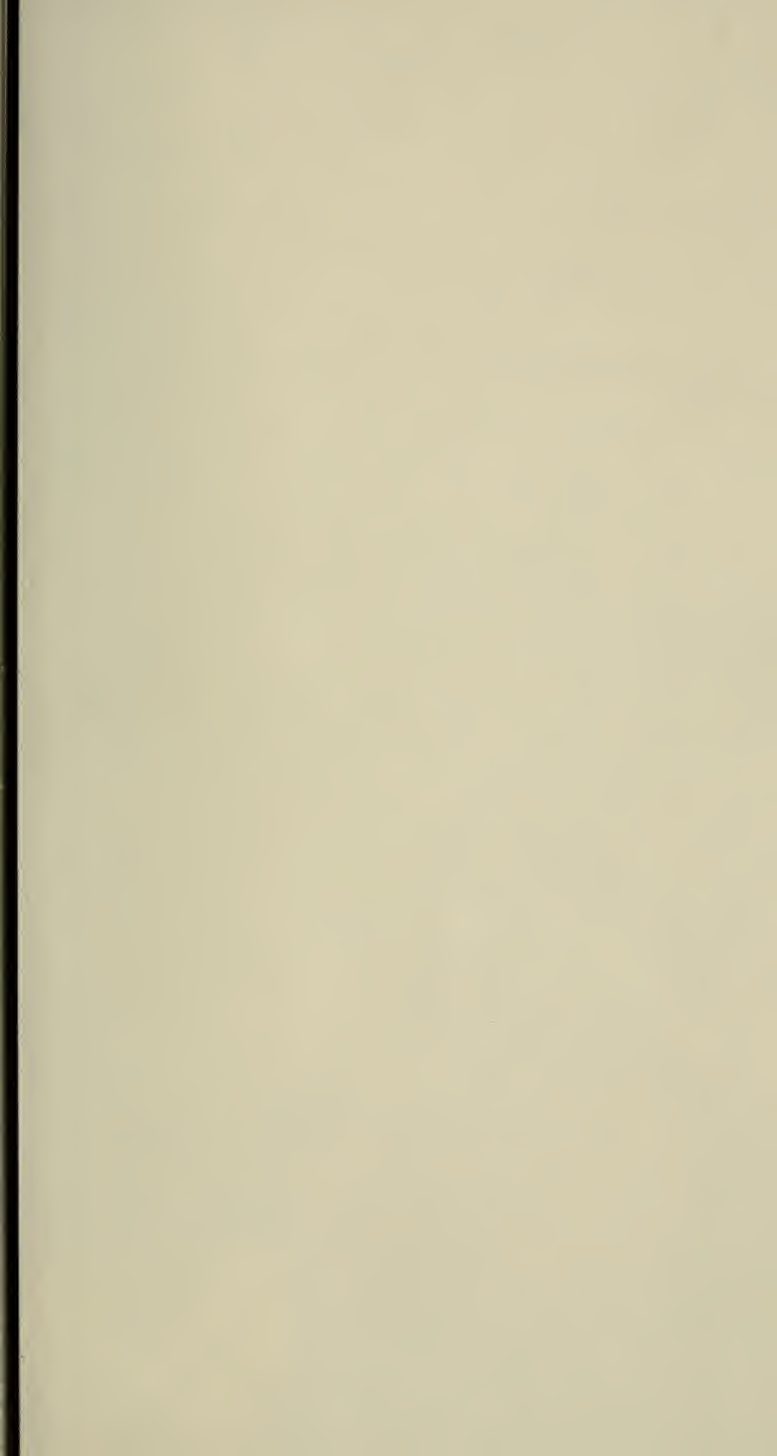


apostles, or from a presbytery, who, on their principles, are just as sure of apostolic succession. The true seal of his commission to them will be, an unction from on high, deep conviction, and an earnest solicitude to impress his momentous message upon the souls of sinful, dying men. Then, the stumbling block of sectarianism being removed out of the way, when the different divisions of the church shall cease to exhaust their energies in contending with each other, the church shall move on in a solid body to convert the world, and the prayer of Christ shall be answered ; “ That they all may be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” “ And then shall come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever.”

THE END.

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